THE GUILT OF WILLIAM HOHENZOLLERN

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BY

KARL KAUTSKY

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PREFACE

After the Revolution of November 9th, 1918, I was requested by the People's Commissioners to enter the Foreign Office as a collateral Secretary of State. One of the first tasks which I set myself was to ascertain whether incriminating material had been removed from the archives, as many at that time feared would be the case. I saw nothing to confirm this suspicion. On the contrary, the first materials which I obtained to test it showed that important materials were at hand. I proposed to the Commissioners that, as a beginning, the documents relating to the outbreak of the war should be published. We owed that to the German people, who had a right to learn the truth about those who had hitherto guided the course of the State. It was, I urged, also necessary because nothing else could so clearly bring home to the incredulous foreigner our complete breach with the old régime.

The Commissioners agreed with me, and entrusted me with the collection and editing of the documents. My past record was, I hope, a warrant that no inconvenient material would be suppressed. The only reservation made was that I should not, like Eisner, issue the separate documents according as they came to light, but should wait until they all lay ready to hand. Politically, this was not quite the most desirable plan, for it necessarily meant the postponing of the publication and of its favourable influence on foreign countries. But it cut the ground from under the champions of the old régime, who could not say that we were garbling the material, and producing documents torn from their context, to which no evidential force could be attached.

I recognized the justice of this view and acted accordingly.

When, in December, my party colleagues, Barth, Dittmann and Haase, left the Government, I also resigned my post as State Secretary, but declared my willingness to proceed with the collection and editing of the war-documents. On this I received the following missive, dated January 4th :

"ESTEEMED COMRADE,

"*In reply to your communication of January 2nd, the Imperial Government requests you to continue your activity as joint-editor of the documents relating to the outbreak of the war.*

"*For the Imperial Government,*

"EBERT."

The term "joint-editor" refers to the practice in vogue during those weeks of associating a Majority and an Independent Socialist in all the higher offices, and Quarck had been appointed along with me.

This practice ceased with the withdrawal of the Independents from the Government. Quarck's joint-editorship also shortly came to an end, and I remained sole editor.

But I need hardly say that I did not execute alone the whole of this great task. Before I had obtained other help, my wife, who had, indeed, for past decades been associated with the planning and execution of almost all my works, came loyally to my aid. Before long, however, a special editorial bureau was found to be necessary.

The work had to be speeded up, and, besides this, I had literary work to do in connection with the Department of Socialization. In December, Quarck and I

had already appealed to Dr. Gustav Mayer to let us call upon him for more workers in the collection and arrangement of the documents than I was able to give. He cordially agreed, although he was thus obliged to lay aside other tasks in which he was interested. At his instance we also obtained the services of Dr. Hermann Meyer, Archivist of the Secret Archives of State, for archival work, and then, at the beginning of February, as the work accumulated and a speedy conclusion became desirable, we engaged also Dr. Richard Wolff and Fräulein N. Stiebel, *cand. hist.*

I feel it my duty to thank all of the above, and particularly the two gentlemen first mentioned, for the valuable and devoted labours which they gave to this great undertaking.

They put it in my power to inform Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, on March 26th, that the collection was practically completed and could at once be set up in type. There were, indeed, a number of points still to be settled: thus, the dates of dispatch or reception of certain documents could not at the moment be accurately fixed. But these and other matters, such as a table of contents, etc., could be added during the process of composition.

It was necessary to go to press as soon as possible if we wished, before the opening of peace negotiations, to lay before the world the clearest evidence that the German Government, which should conduct these negotiations, had nothing whatever in common with that which had declared war.

But the Government clearly took another view. They postponed the publication, and issued, instead of these documents, a report on the outbreak of the war in the White Book of June, 1919, to which reference

is made in the present work, and which reveals anything but a breach with the policy of the fallen Government.

While my colleagues and I were awaiting instructions to send the collection to the printers, we occupied ourselves in the completion of the work and in giving it the finishing touches. As, however, the hopes of a speedy permission to go to press became ever more remote, I could not withhold my colleagues from the other urgent duties which were calling them. At the beginning of May they concluded their work on the documents. I knew, however, that I could reckon on their immediate services as soon as we received orders to print.

Yet even after the signing of the Peace Treaty these orders were delayed.

At last, one fine day in the middle of September, I was rung up on the telephone about this matter—not, indeed, by the Foreign Office, but by a newspaper, which wanted to know whether it was true that Herren Mendelssohn, Montgelas and Schücking were to publish my collection, and not myself. I could only reply that I knew less of it than did the inquirer. I only heard of it through the newspapers.

The Government was, in fact, so wanting in good faith as to give to others, without even informing me of the fact, the publication of the collection of documents undertaken by me and carried out under my direction.

To this day the reasons for throwing me overboard have never been clear to me. The Government has never given any.

Their proceedings created so much bad blood that they found themselves compelled to call in. Professor Schücking and Count Montgelas came to me at the end of September with the assurance that what they intended to publish was exclusively my collection, in which not a

line should be altered without my consent. I was also to receive every facility for seeing the work through the press. They begged me to sanction the publication.

These two gentlemen were therefore, to all intents and purposes, merely commissioned to subject my work to a supervision which I had no reason to shun, and to attend to all those minor details which are necessarily associated with the printing of a work of this class, and which I was glad to leave in their hands.

As I was not at all concerned about my own personality, but very much about the work in hand, I saw no reason to sulk in a corner, and I declared myself willing to co-operate in the work provided the material went to press at once.

This, too, was promised me, and so this collection of documents of the Foreign Office about the outbreak of the war, which had almost become a myth, has at last made its appearance.

Naturally, in the course of the work I had not contented myself with merely stringing the material together. I felt compelled to bring into relation with each other all the revelations offered by a mass of nearly nine hundred documents, and to bring out their connection with the remaining and already-known material connected with the outbreak of the war. I did this not as a partisan, but as an historian, who is simply anxious to discover how things came about.

I undertook this work in the first instance merely for my own satisfaction. An historian cannot collect materials without inwardly working over them. But the more the work progressed, the more keenly I desired that it should not be done for myself alone, but for the great mass of the public, who would have less time and,

for the most part, less opportunity than I to work carefully through the huge mass of material.

Thus it was that the present volume took shape. In its essential features it has been ready for months. I have, however, continually delayed its publication, a proceeding also demanded by the constant necessity for working-in and dealing with new materials which cropped up, especially in the German White Book of June, and the publications of Dr. Gooss.

It cost me much self-denial not to bring out my work in view of the flood of revelations about the war which were poured forth during the past few months. It was not easy to be silent where I had so much to say.

In view of the constant delays of the Government, I should have felt myself justified in letting my book appear even before the publication of the documents, the collection of which had been so long completed.

Since I laid down my post as Collateral Secretary, I had not worked in the archives of the Foreign Office as one of its officials, but as an independent historian. As proof of this, I may observe that since that date I have received no salary or remuneration of any kind.

An historian who makes use of archives owes no account to any superior authority of the use he may make of the fruits of his labours.

If, in spite of all this, I kept silence, it was not due to any juristic but rather to political considerations. The whole political advantage which might accrue to the German people in the eyes of its former enemies through the publication of these documents was only to be looked for if they were published *by*, not *against*, the Government. No doubt, in the last resort, the publication would have had to take place, even in the latter case. The situation of our internal politics would

have demanded it. But so long as there was any possibility that the Government would itself publish these documents, I did not wish to anticipate it with my elaboration of the material.

And now they have in fact appeared, and I have no longer any reason for delay.

I have no doubt that my views will be much contested—there can be no view of the war to which everyone would assent. And no language is more ambiguous, none is so much intended to be read between the lines, as that of diplomacy, with which we are here almost exclusively concerned. The Kaiser alone discards all diplomatic methods of expressing himself. The clearness of his utterances leaves nothing to be desired. And his marginal comments afford the rare satisfaction to a people of seeing, for once, an Emperor in undress.

Yet, in spite of all diplomatic disguises, the Austrian documents have brought about an almost unanimous agreement as to the guilt attaching to Austrian statecraft. For anyone who has reached the point of rightly estimating this fact, the language of the German documents will not present much difficulty in enabling him to pass judgment on German statecraft as well.

In view of all that has now become so clear, the temptation was strongly felt to show how sorely the German people were misled, especially by those in the ranks of the Majority Socialists, who so violently attacked the position of myself and my friends during the war, and who defended most strongly the war-policy of the Imperial Government. Truly, of their conceptions there remains to-day nothing but a heap of broken crockery.

But just for this reason it is hardly necessary at the present day to do battle with David, Heilmann, and

others. Moreover, if one did so, it would be at cost of the strict exposition of the facts, and it was to be feared that a publication which appeals to all who sincerely desire to know the truth about the origin of the war might, through such a polemic, take on the partisan or even personal character, which I desired to avoid. I have, therefore, confined polemics to cases where it was required, in order to make clear the situation of affairs, and have as far as possible avoided recrimination. That this work will, nevertheless, involve me in fresh controversy, I am well prepared to discover.

But whatever attitude one may take towards it, I trust that every reader of the documents here published will keep one thing in mind: They testify to the thoughts and deeds of German statesmen, not of the German people. The guilt of the latter, so far as they are guilty, consists only in this, that they did not concern themselves sufficiently about the foreign policy of their rulers. But this is a fault which the German people shares with every other. It was in vain that more than half a century ago, at the foundation of the first International, Marx proclaimed it to be the "duty of the working classes to master for themselves the mysteries of international statecraft, in order to keep an eye on the diplomatic proceedings of their Governments."

Hitherto this has only been achieved in very imperfect measure. The present war, with its dreadful consequences, points the working classes more sternly than ever to the fulfilment of this duty.

As a slight attempt in that direction, I offer the present work.

K. KAUTSKY.

Berlin, 1st November, 1919.

The Guilt of William Hohenzollern

CHAPTER I

WHO ARE THE GUILTY ?

SINCE the outbreak of the world-war one question has exercised every mind : Who brought upon us this frightful calamity ? In what persons or what institutions are we to find its originating cause ?

This is not merely a scientific question for the historian ; it is eminently a practical one for the politician. Its answer is a death-sentence for the guilty—not in the physical sense but certainly in the political. Persons and institutions whose power has produced anything so fearful must be politically flung to the dead ; they must be divested of all power.

But just for this reason, because the question of the origination of the war is not an academic but a highly practical one with far-reaching consequences for the organization of public life, the real authors of it have from the beginning sought to cover up their traces. In this attempt they have found eager helpers in all those who, though not themselves involved in any responsibility, have an interest in maintaining the power of the guilty persons and institutions.

This fact has long operated to render very difficult the discovery of the true authorship of the war. On

the other hand, a practical interest in the cause had its effect in sharpening the critical insight of the opposing parties, so that there were not a few who came on the right track at the beginning. Thus the fog began slowly to dissolve, until the latest publication of documents by the Austrian and German Foreign Offices dispersed it altogether. We are now in a position to see clear.

And yet one cloud lies still before our eyes. It is alleged to be a profound piece of Marxian philosophy. Marx taught that the course of history is guided not by particular persons or institutions, but in the last resort by economic conditions. Capitalism in its most developed form, that of finance, everywhere creates imperialism—the impulse towards forcible extension of the territory of the State. This law governs all States—all are warlike by nature, and from this condition the world-war proceeded. No individual persons or institutions are guilty, but Capitalism as a whole: this it is that must be combated.

That sounds very radical, and yet it works in a very conservative sense wherever this idea governs practical effort. For Capitalism is merely an abstraction, derived from the observation of numerous individual phenomena, and affording an indispensable aid in the attempt to investigate these in the law of their mutual relations.

But one cannot *fight* an abstraction except theoretically. It cannot be fought in the field of practice. Practically, we can only fight the individual phenomena. The theoretic comprehension of the nature of Capital does not relieve us from the necessity of this practical struggle—on the contrary, its function is to further it, inasmuch as it enables us to bring together the details of the struggle in a systematic connection, and thereby to shape it more effectively. At the same time it always

remains a struggle against definite institutions and persons, as the bearers of definite social functions.

From the Marxian standpoint, therefore, one can at most say that the object of the struggle is not the *punishment* of the individuals against whom it is directed. Every man is merely the product of the conditions in which he grows up and lives. It is unjust to punish even the worst of criminals. The task of society is rather to take from him the possibility of doing further mischief, to make him, if possible, a useful, not a mischievous, member of society, and to remove those conditions which made him what he was and gave him the possibility and the power of doing harm.

And this is the position which a Marxist should take up towards the authors of the world-war. But it is by no means the Marxian doctrine that we should divert investigation from the guilty persons by dwelling on the impersonal guilt of Capitalism.

Marx and Engels never contented themselves with general disquisitions on the destructive effects of capital. They were just as much concerned with tracing out the working of particular institutions and parties, and their political leaders, such as Palmerston and Napoleon. To follow the same course in regard to those who brought about the world-war is not only our right, but our duty ; and that not alone from a consideration of foreign but also of home politics, so that the return of the persons and institutions guilty of this fearful ruin shall be made for ever impossible.

CHAPTER II

THE ISOLATION OF GERMANY

IT has been objected that the last days before the outbreak of war should not alone be considered in deciding the question as to where the guilt lies. We must, it is said, go further back, in order to discover how the contending elements were formed. In doing this, we shall find that imperialism, and the movement for extension of territory, characterized all the Great Powers, and not Germany alone.

Very true; but this movement of extension does not wholly explain the wlord-war, the peculiarity of which is that all the Great Powers and several of the smaller ones took part in it, and that all the world united itself against Germany. To show how this came about is the problem we have to deal with. The mere word "imperialism" does not take us any further.

The uprise of imperialism at the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century is marked by the fact that, far and wide, the Great Powers began to come into conflict with each other. First we had France with Italy, and then with England; America with Spain, and also with England; England with the Boers, with whom all the world sympathized; and, finally, Russia with Japan, behind whom England stood.

During that period Germany was the least affected

by these international conflicts, which sometimes broke out in war.

Germany had, indeed, in 1871, committed the great mistake of tearing Alsace and Lorraine against their will from France, and thus driving France into the arms of Russia. The French passion for *revanche*, for reunion with their disruptured and enslaved brethren, began, in the course of time, to take a milder form; all the more as the prospects of the French in a war with Germany grew ever worse; for the population of France remained almost stationary, while that of Germany rapidly increased, and on this account alone the latter gained a constantly growing superiority over France. In 1866 the territory of what became later the German Empire numbered forty million inhabitants; that of France thirty-eight millions. In 1870 if France had had to do, as she hoped, with Prussia alone, her enemy would have numbered only twenty-four millions. But in 1910 the population of France was only thirty-nine millions, as against sixty-five millions in Germany.

Hence the alarm of France at the thought of a war with the overpowering strength of Germany—an alarm still evident in the conditions of the Peace of Versailles. Hence, also, the need of the alliance with Russia.

Through the hostility which prevailed between Germany and France, Russia, after 1871, felt herself in the position of arbitrator between the two, and therefore master of the whole of continental Europe. Trusting in that position, Russia ventured in 1877 to make war on Turkey, and found in the end that she was only checked in the exploitation of her victory by England and Austria. In the Berlin Congress of 1878 Bismarck had to decide between these Powers and Russia. He

made himself independent of the Tsar and supported Austria and England.

From that date Russia turned away from Germany and established ever closer relations with France, so that Bismarck, in spite of his strong Russian sympathies, was ever more directed towards Austria. With Austria, in 1882, he associated Italy as an ally, when the French occupied Tunis, and thus deeply wounded the Italian imperialists who had been casting their eyes on that country.

England remained in "splendid isolation" outside of both combinations, but rather inclining to the Triple Alliance than towards the Russo-French Entente. Differences had arisen with France in connection with African aspirations (Morocco and more particularly Egypt, with the Sudan). In regard to Russia, her old hostility over the question of Turkey, and particularly of India, was continually finding fresh nourishment. On the other hand, England was always on friendly terms with Austria and Italy, and stood in no pronounced opposition to Germany, whose leader, Bismarck, had inflamed England's conflicts with Russia on the one hand, and with France on the other, in order to play between them the rôle of arbitrator and of the *tertius gaudens*. This was not, from the moral point of view, a very lofty policy, but it was a most fruitful one for the economic prosperity of Germany. It spared Germany all wars, at the very period of the uprise of imperialism, and enabled her to enlarge her industry, her commerce, and also her colonial possessions, by exploiting, without taking part in them, the imperialistic conflicts of the other Powers.

Thus we see that even in an epoch of imperialism it was possible for a Great Power to pursue another than

a warlike policy. It is true that such a policy demanded statesmen with some stuff in their heads and with sufficient independence to assert themselves against those interested in an imperialistic policy of force. Nor were the latter more wanting in Germany than elsewhere; they were, in fact, strengthened by the success of the peace policy. The fabulous upgrowth of Germany in the economic sphere at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century provided the means for powerful military armaments, and it created a class of force-loving industrial magnates, particularly in the iron industry. With these associated themselves those old partisans of the policy of force, the Junkers, and the greater part of the intellectuals, who were professionally engaged to proclaim the warlike glory of the Hohenzollerns and to inoculate the whole youth of Germany with the virus of megalomania.

Bismarck's successor, Caprivi, pursued the old policy of maintaining peace amid all the imperialistic conflicts of the surrounding world. But when Prince Bülow, in 1897, became at first Foreign Minister, afterwards (1900) Chancellor, and with him Tirpitz became Chief of the Admiralty, we saw a completely new orientation of our foreign policy—the transition to a world-policy, which meant, if it meant anything at all, the establishment of the German domination of the world.

In the measure in which these tendencies came more and more into the light, they produced also a complete alteration in the attitude of the world towards Germany. Formerly the world was imperialistically divided, and Germany, on the principle, *divide et impera*, was the most powerful factor in it; henceforth all mutual opposition among the various States was absorbed in

the one great mass of opposition to Germany, who seemed to threaten all of them.

The beginning of this fateful change in German world-policy is to be found in the Navy Bill of 1897, which led to the competition in armaments with England, and which was only comprehensible on the supposition that its ultimate goal was the overthrow of England's supremacy at sea. And, in fact, this has been often enough avowed by pan-German organs and politicians as the task of German naval preparations.

In this way public opinion in England was intensely excited against Germany.

England won the dominion of the seas in the time of the Napoleonic wars, and no Power has since undertaken to challenge it. Shortly after the Peace of Vienna this dominion had markedly changed its character. During the first decades of the nineteenth century England was still in large measure an agrarian country, which could support its own population, if need were. Far different was the case a little later. As the most industrialized of all countries, England saw herself compelled to rely, more than any other territory, not merely for raw materials but for food, on abundant imports from oversea.

Even in 1850, England, Wales and Scotland alone, not including Ireland, had a rural population as numerous as that of the towns. In the year 1911 the town population of England and Wales amounted to 78 per cent., in Scotland to 75 per cent., of the total inhabitants of the country.

In the eighteenth century England was a corn-exporting country. Even during the early part of the nineteenth century its home production in corn nearly covered the home demand. In the decade 1811–1820

the yearly average import of wheat was only 400,000 quarters. In 1850 an import of nearly 4,000,000 quarters was required. This was increased tenfold by 1909, while the home production was only 7,000,000. Shortly before the war fully 84 per cent. of the wheat needed in England was imported from other lands.

But this whole import was carried *by sea*. This meant that in case of war England would be delivered over to starvation so soon as her supremacy at sea was gone. This supremacy, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century was hardly more than a means for the extension and preservation of her colonial empire—imperialistic objects, to speak in modern language—became ever a more and more indispensable condition for the maintenance of her national independence. Supremacy at sea became for the British people not only an imperialistic but a democratic demand; at least pending a general disarmament and abolition of all warfare—pacifist objects which, precisely because of the dangers attaching to war, became very popular with the English populace, not Socialists alone but also Liberals. Since the idea of supremacy at sea made its way not only into imperialistic but also into democratic sections of the people, it took on a very liberal complexion. It was not Protectionist nor Monopolist, but had Free-Trade affinities, according to the principle of the Open Door.

Thus England contrived during the whole of the nineteenth century that no other Power should cast a threatening glance upon her naval supremacy. Germany alone began this threatening policy, at the close of the nineteenth century, when England's supremacy was demanded, as a matter of life and death, far more imperatively than in the time of Napoleon I.

Anyone who knows England and the English must be aware that the German naval programme was alone sufficient to bring round ever increasing sections of the English population to the notion that Germany must at any cost be made to put a stop to her naval preparations, even through a war, if not otherwise—a war which, thanks to Germany's former policy, also threatened to array against her Russia and France.

Herr von Bülow, who inaugurated this fatal policy, himself confesses that it threatened Germany with war. In his book on "The Policy of Germany" which appeared in 1916, he writes:

> "*During the first ten years after the introduction of the Navy Bill of* 1897 *and the beginning of our ship-building, an English policy, pursued with relentless determination, would no doubt have been in a position forcibly to prevent the development of Germany as a Naval Power, and to make us incapable of doing harm before our claws, in naval matters, were grown. . . . And in the eighteenth month of the war the 'Frankfurter Zeitung' confirms the view that when it had come to a settlement by force of arms England had sorrowfully to perceive that, in spite of all her schemes of encirclement, she had missed the right moment when she could have reduced her dreaded competitor to insignificance.*"—Page 40.

So the naval policy was undertaken at the peril of inciting England to war with Germany. If it did not at once come to that, it was no fault of German policy; it was the restraint of England, which, instead of violently striking down the threatening foe in war, preferred

the so-called "encirclement" policy, that is to say, the promotion of that isolation of Germany which her own world-policy had brought about.

The lamentable effects of the equally senseless and provocative naval policy of Germany were intensified by her obstinate sabotage of all attempts at an international understanding as to a general limitation of armaments, and at the settling of international conflicts by peaceful methods through courts of arbitration. This was clear even at the first Hague Conference of 1899, which was concerned with the above objects.

> "*It was just at the time when the Hague Conference was sitting that the German Kaiser made his speech at Wiesbaden, in which he declared that a 'well-ground sword' was the best guarantee of peace.*"*

At this Conference the German delegate could not be got to vote for obligatory arbitration even in cases of demands for compensation or of juridical controversies. Even these insignificant limitations of the settlement of international conflicts by force were wrecked on the opposition of Germany, which, later on, rejected all attempts to arrive at a limitation of armaments.

What wonder that hatred of Germany spread throughout the world, not only among the rival Imperial Powers, but also among the champions of international peace and freedom!

The rôle which Tsarism had hitherto played as the worst enemy of the European democracy now fell more and more to the German military monarchy. A more senseless policy could hardly have been conceived. It stood condemned not only from the point of view

* Fried: "Handbook of the Peace Movement," p. 171.

of international Socialism, but also from that of any Imperialism which should try to take account of the existing position of forces. A reasonable imperialistic policy for Germany would never have been such as to call forth simultaneously the enmity both of Russia and of England, the two Powers which, with Germany, dominated Europe. It must, on the one hand, to gain its ends against Russia and her ally, France, have enlisted the support of England, which meant, above all, the abandonment of her naval competition. And this would have meant, in accordance with the character of English policy, the triumph of the principle of the Open Door throughout the whole world—a principle which offered the most brilliant prospects to German industry.

But this would not, indeed, have been a policy after the hearts of the ironmasters, monopolists and militarists. The grand object of these was extension at the cost of England. In that case, however, it was necessary to come to an understanding with Russia. Germany, in alliance with Russia and thus more fully ensured against danger from France, might with an easy mind have taken up the naval competition with England. In case of war the English could do Germany no great harm. They might occupy her colonies, suppress her ocean-trade, but could not starve her out. Germany, on the contrary, with the help of Russia on land, would have been able to wreck the foundations of England's world-position and to achieve what Napoleon I. had in other wars in vain endeavoured to effect, namely, the occupation of Egypt and an advance on India.

It was sheer insanity to attempt the overthrow of England, not in union with Russia, but in war with with Russia, France, and with the whole world.

CHAPTER III

GERMAN PROVOCATIONS

FOR the moment, German policy did not mean war with the whole world. It did, however, involve the danger of such a war. The stronger the encirclement, the more complete the isolation of Germany, the more necessary it became, in her own interests, to avoid any provocative action that might entangle her in war.

The Marxist who contends that imperialism would have brought about a war in any case, whatever policy Germany had pursued, is like one who should defend a pack of silly boys for amusing themselves by throwing matches into a cask of gunpowder. The boys, he maintains, are not to blame for the devastating explosion which followed their practices, it is the circumstance that there was powder in the cask. Had there been water in it, nothing would have happened. No doubt. But in our case the boys knew there was powder in the cask—they had put a good deal of it in themselves.

One might indeed say that the greater Germany's isolation, and the more threatening the danger of a world-war, the more her provocations increased.

The growing danger itself had the effect of intensifying the bitterness on both sides; it formed a new impulse towards the increase of armaments and thereby towards the strengthening of warlike influences. It fatally increased the number of those who believed

war to be unavoidable, and who therefore urged that it should be let loose, as a preventive war, at the moment when circumstances were favourable to Germany and embarrassing to the enemy.

In Germany, step by step with her military preparations, grew also the confidence in her strength. This displayed itself in many circles as a veritable megalomania, basing itself on the history of Prussia, which for a century and a half had, with the exception of Jena, nothing but victories on its record.

The pan-German section in particular exceeded all bounds in the provocations it uttered. These were of serious significance, for the pan-Germans were the leading element in those circles of society which formed the ruling class in Germany and from which its Government sprang.

The mischief was still more increased by the personality of the Kaiser, whose mind was militarist through and through, and at the same time superficial, excessively vain, and devoted to theatrical effect. He never shrank from demonstrations and speeches of the most challenging kind when he believed that they would impress those around him.

We have already noted that in the days of the first Hague Conference he declared that, as against courts of arbitration and disarmament, a well-ground sword was the best guarantee of peace.

One year later (July 27th, 1900), when troops were embarking for China at Bremerhaven, he laid down the following beautiful principles of warfare:

> "*No quarter is to be given. No prisoners are to be made. . . . As the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves a thousand years ago . . .*

so now let the name of German go down in China for a thousand years, so that a Chinaman will never again dare even to look askance at a German."

If later on, in the world-war, the German methods of warfare were set down to a system of cruelty thought out in cold blood, and Germans got the name of Huns, the German people have their Kaiser to thank for it.

While through such utterances the German people were made abhorrent in the eyes of all humane thinkers, William, at the same time, did not hesitate to fling down his challenge to the imperialists of other lands. He began in 1896 with his telegrams to the Boer president, Kruger, in which William at the outset of the conflict between England and the Boers assured the latter of his friendship.

Shortly afterwards, in 1898, he declared himself the patron and protector of the three hundred millions of Mohammedans in the world. That included the Mohammedans in French Algeria as well as those living under English rule in Egypt and India, the Mohammedans in Russia, and those whom Russia was threatening in Turkey.

It was merely a continuation of this policy of provocation when in Tangier in 1905, as France began to take an active interest in Morocco, William promised his support to the Sultan against anyone who should threaten his independence, and later, in 1911, in connection with the same dispute, suddenly sent a war-ship to the Moroccan harbour of Agadir.

On both occasions the peace of the world was endangered. The situation was not improved by the fact that always, when the time came for the threat to be made good, William lost courage and left in the lurch those to whom he had pledged his protection. Thus it

was in Morocco, and thus, most discreditably, in the case of the Boers. And this contributed to add contempt to the hatred with which Germany was regarded.

In these conflicts the antagonists on both sides were imperialists. In the war of mighty England against the little Boer Republic, the public opinion of the whole civilized world had unanimously taken part with the smaller and weaker party. In the case of Morocco, the working classes of both Germany and France were fully agreed in opposition to their Governments, and contributed not a little to the maintenance of peace. And through this attitude of the Socialist proletariate, the incalculable, abrupt and provocative element in German world-policy was to some extent reduced.

CHAPTER IV

AUSTRIA

THE German Government, however, was not contented to play the fool in its own house alone. It felt impelled to make itself accountable also for the stupidities of *Austrian* policy, which likewise threatened to kindle a world-war, not indeed for objects oversea, but in relation to the independence of States in Europe itself, which were directly threatened by Austria.

The world-policy of Germany had brought it about that she had now scarcely a friend among the independent and durable States in Europe. Even relations with Italy, her ally, had grown cool. Two States alone were on terms of close friendship with Germany—two States which had lost their vitality and could only maintain themselves by powerful help from without—Austria and Turkey.

The Habsburg State, like that of the Sultan of Constantinople, was a State of nationalities which maintained itself not through the common interests of these nationalities, not through its superiority in well-being and in freedom, but solely through military force. This type of State was growing ever more irreconcilable with modern democracy, which was developing irresistibly under the influence of modern means of communication.

Austria and Turkey, at least Turkey in Europe, were

thus irretrievably doomed to perish. So little did the statesmen of Germany understand this, that it was precisely these Powers on which they chose to lean. But indeed what others had their world-policy now left to them?

Both these States stood in a position of traditional hostility to Russia, which was always straining towards an outlet on the Mediterranean, towards Constantinople, but which had learned by repeated experiences that this goal could not be directly arrived at. Russia decided therefore on a circuitous route, by dissolving Turkey into a collection of small independent States, of which it was hoped that, related as they were by religion, and also in part—in the case of Serbia and Bulgaria—by language, to the Russian people, they might become vassal States of the Tsardom. In opposition to the Austrian and the Turkish Governments, Russia therefore favoured the movement for independence in the Balkans, and therefore advanced on the inevitable course of historical progress, while the other Governments set themselves against it. The same monarch whom his own subjects cursed as a hangman and the Tsar of Blood was hailed in the Balkans as the Tsar of Deliverance. Russian imperialism, indeed, would not have attained its object among the Balkan peoples. The more their strength and their independence of the Sultan increased, the more independent they tended to become as against the Tsar also. They felt themselves drawn to him so long only as they needed his protection, so long as their independence was threatened from another side.

This other side, in the decades immediately preceding the war, was revealing itself more and more as Austria. In view of the national movements which were

growing up at home among the Rumanians and Yugo-Slavs, who were particularly oppressed by the ruling classes in Hungary, a strong Serbia and Rumania seemed to the leaders of Austro-Hungarian policy a highly dangerous development. To the agrarian party in the Monarchy—and again more particularly to the Hungarian section—the agrarian export territories of Serbia and Rumania were a thorn in the flesh. Finally, to the imperialists, militarists, bureaucrats and capitalists of Austria, who all desired to control the road to Salonika, the existence of an independent Serbia appeared an obstacle which they could not but desire to remove.

The policy of all these Austrian elements forced Serbia and Rumania into the arms of Russia.

While the Austrian statesmen believed that they had to crush Serbia in order to bolt the door against Russian intrigues in the Balkans, the true state of the case was exactly the reverse. It was just through Austria's hostility that Russian influence was strengthened.

To eliminate it, the leaders of Austrian policy would have had to pursue a policy of concessions to the Serbs and Rumanians in Austria, and also towards the neighbouring States of Serbia and Rumania. Such a policy was impossible to the rulers of Austro-Hungary. To save the State on these lines they would have had to act contrary to their own interests of the moment.

If the national democratic and proletarian opposition in Austria failed to bring about the downfall of these rulers, then Austria was doomed, just as Turkey was; and doomed also was anyone who had bound himself to this State for weal or woe.

At the same time Austria felt itself as a Great Power, wished to behave as if it were independent, and made

continued attempts at an independent policy, which grew ever more futile according as difficulties increased, within and without.

Nor was the situation helped by any personal quality in the Government of the State. At its head stood a monarch who had never been noted for intellectual ability, to whom age and a series of heavy blows of fate had made repose imperative, and whose régime had taken on the character of senility. But it was his misfortune that the peoples of Austria took no account of this need of repose, and that their revolt against the impossible State into which they were compressed grew continually more violent. Under the influence of this growing unrest in the realm, the Emperor's senile need of repose gave rise to the most contradictory phenomena; among other things, it brought about some astonishing capitulations. But these had not the desired effect in calming the popular mind, for they only touched individual points, they made nothing but patchwork. Of any radical reform the régime was incapable.

If concessions did not effect the desired end in producing peace, then the need of repose brought about a recourse to extreme harshness, so that the disturbers of the peace might be suppressed by force. And if this was in the first instance directed to home affairs, foreign politics were also affected by it. In Austria home and foreign affairs were very closely related, from the fact that of the eight nationalities represented in the realm only two dwelt wholly within its borders—the rest were to a great extent outside it, and in some cases were organized in independent national States. The national movements of Rumanians, Ruthenes and Poles had their influence on Austrian foreign policy, and still more those of the Italian and Yugo-Slav Irredenta.

To all this we must add that besides its Emperor, Austria obtained a second ruler in the person of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who in 1896 became heir to the throne, just about the time when Germany was embarking on her fatal naval policy. The imperialistic tendencies which at this period seized on all the Great Powers, began from that date to be felt in Austria too. Austria, however, could have no designs on oversea dominion. Austrian imperialism, like the Russian, sought to extend its territories on land. That was best to be attained in the south by conquering the road to Salonika, a policy which required that Albania and Serbia should be turned into an Austrian colony. What no State in Europe had dared to attempt since 1871, since the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine—the forcible incorporation against its will of a politically independent population —this was what the senile though extensive Power of Austria now undertook to accomplish through the systematic maltreatment of the small but youthfully vigorous State of Serbia.

Franz Ferdinand, young, energetic and even reckless, who knew no need of repose, no vacillations between concession and suppression, but built on force alone, became the incorporation of these imperialist tendencies, which he was able to emphasize all the more since, as the Emperor grew older, the influence of his heir with the army and on foreign policy increased. Since 1906, when Goluchowski was superseded by Aehrenthal, foreign policy was directed by Franz Ferdinand.

Ignorant braggarts, he and his tools did not shrinz from the grossest provocations, caring nothing that they were thus challenging Russia, the protector of Serbia, and endangering the peace of the world. Why

should they care, so long as the big German brother with his mighty, mailed fist stood behind them! And he stood behind them because his own position in the world was threatened, if the only military Power of any consequence on whose support he could reckon were to suffer loss in power or prestige.

CHAPTER V

THE BALKAN CRISES

THE first of the frivolous acts by which Austria endangered the peace of the world took place in the autumn of 1908, when, without any necessity, the regions administered by her for the Turks, Bosnia and Herzegovina, were annexed; a shameless breach of treaty with Turkey, and a deep injury to the national feeling of the Yugo-Slavs, who were necessarily most embittered by this treatment of the Bosnians as chattels who could at will be exchanged or carried off. The danger of a world-war became imminent, for Russia saw herself forced back in her Balkan policy without receiving any compensation. But the other European States, and especially England, also uttered the most vigorous protests against this insolent tearing-up of the Treaty of 1878. Austria must have withdrawn had not the German Empire come to her side.

This attitude of Germany's laid the foundation for the later world-war. Yet German politicians have, even during this war (though before the collapse), defended it. Prince Bülow, in his previously quoted work, "The Policy of Germany," takes credit for his action at this crisis:

> "*In my speeches in the Reichstag, as well as in my instructions to our representatives abroad, I*

allowed no doubt to prevail that Germany was determined under all circumstances to hold with Nibelung-faith to her alliance with Austria. The German sword was flung into the scales of European judgment, directly for the sake of our Austro-Hungarian ally, indirectly for the maintenance of European peace, and first of all and above all for the prestige of Germany and her position in the world." (Page 60.)

So these were the methods by which the old régime sought to preserve peace: it never thought of restraining its ally from frivolous provocations, but only of throwing its sword into the scales. And by this, as well as by its sanction of a breach of treaty, it believed itself to be working for the prestige of Germany before the world!

Hashagen, in his little book "Outlines of World-Policy," which appeared in the same year as Bülow's, writes in even more enthusiastic language:

> "*For the confirmation of the alliance on both sides it is an inestimable advantage that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina soon gave rise to so intense an international resentment, not only against Austria, but against Germany too. It was precisely this resentment which made the bond of relation of the two allies wholly indissoluble."* (II., p. 6.)

Truly an ingenious policy, which saw, in the kindling of an intense international resentment against oneself, an inestimable advantage, for the precise reason that it bound Germany fast to the inwardly bankrupt State of Austria!

The "German sword" in 1908 and 1909 kept the peace of the world, because Russia at that time had to swallow quietly the insult levelled at Serbia, and through Serbia at itself. It was still bleeding from the wounds inflicted by the war with Japan and by the Revolution.

Serbia was on March 31st, 1909, obliged, in a humble Note, to promise better behaviour, and to abandon its protest against the annexation.

But Russia naturally did not accept final defeat in the Balkans. Serbia, in her isolation, had to retreat before Austria. Russian statecraft now succeeded in forming an alliance among the Balkan States. A federation of the Balkan peoples in one common Republic had been for years the demand of the Yugo-Slav socialists. It offered to the Balkan peoples the best conditions for maintaining their independence, both as against Turkey and Austria, as well as Russia.

Such a formation was not, of course, acceptable to Russian policy. Quite the contrary. As often before, however, Russia knew how to use for her own ends the force springing from an idea that worked along the inevitable lines of development. She formed an association not among the Balkan *peoples*, but among the Balkan *princes*, with the object of putting an end to the dominion of the Turks in Europe.

In October, 1912, war broke out between the allied States of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro against Turkey. The latter was easily defeated, and the European Powers accepted the situation with the watchword: The Balkans for the Balkan peoples.

And so, in spite of the storm brewing in the south-eastern corner, the peace of the world seemed to be maintained. But Austria now comes on the scene again and endangers it by giving the hated Serbia another

kick. Serbia is obliged to relinquish the outlet on the Adriatic which it had fought for and had won.

This time it is more serious than in 1908.

Austria, like Russia, mobilizes in February, 1913. But mobilization means preparation for war, not war itself. England mediates, and Russia yields once more. Mobilization is annulled in March. Peace is preserved, but at the cost of Serbia, and, through Serbia, of her protector, Russia. Serbia must surrender her outlet on the Adriatic.

And thus a new and dangerous tension is created. Serbia endeavours to obtain compensation at the expense of Bulgaria in Macedonia. She finds allies in Greece and Rumania. Their combined forces overthrow Bulgaria and reduce her territory.

Yet this time also the peace of the world is preserved. Europe holds aloof from intervention. So it comes on August 10th, 1913, to the Peace of Bucharest. It is hoped that the Balkans will now be at peace, and that the peace of the world may be ensured for a long period—just one year before the outbreak of the world-war.

Austria, indeed, was not pleased with the Peace of Bucharest. She requested the approval of Italy for a "preventive defensive action" against Serbia. Italy nipped the idea in the bud. We may suppose, with Prince Lichnowsky, that the Marquis San Giuliano, who described the plan as a "*pericolosissima aventura*" —a most dangerous adventure—prevented us from being entangled in a world-war in the summer of 1913. But even in Germany, Austria found on this occasion no friendly response. It must not be forgotten that a Hohenzollern reigned in Rumania. Germany was, therefore, primarily concerned to maintain the Peace

of Bucharest. To this must refer the remark about "the leaning of this lofty personage (William) towards Serbia" in the memorandum handed by Tisza to the Austrian Emperor on July 1st, 1914.*

But the rulers of Austria would not be content. They tilted incessantly at the conditions established by the Peace of Bucharest, and at last succeeded in bringing Germany round to their side.

While the two Allies thus shaped the policy which was to end in the world-war, they succeeded most admirably in preluding it not only by alienating the sympathies of the other Governments, but also of the peoples. There were movements towards greater freedom in Croatia and in Bosnia. Austria combated them not merely with a reign of terror, but with prosecutions and with a propaganda which were not only so unscrupulous, but so ineffably stupid in their execution, that she had to submit to have it proved against her (especially in the Friedjung prosecution, 1909) that she was working with forged documents, forged, moreover, in the Austrian Embassy in Belgrade under the ægis of Count Forgach—the same man who in 1914 was to be fatally concerned in the Ultimatum to Serbia, and the unloosing of the world-war. Even worse were the "moral conquests" made in the world by Germany, in the Zabern affair of November, 1913, immediately before the world-war; an affair which showed that in the German Empire the civilian population are outlaws in relation to the military, and that the latter completely dominate the civil Government.

At the close of the previous century, the Dreyfus affair in France had shown that the French military

* "Austrian Red Book on the Events that led up to the War," 1919, I., p. 18.

were also capable of remarkable achievements in the way of thoughtlessness and arrogance. But this affair had ended, after a severe struggle, in the victory of the civil Government, while in Germany the result was the overthrow of the civil authority before the military.

Apart from this, the Zabern affair had the effect of tearing open in France the wound of Alsace-Lorraine, which had begun to heal. And thus Germany and Austria went into the world-war, loaded before all the world with the reputation of falsehood, forgery, violence, the dictatorship of the sword, the denial of civil rights to the annexed provinces.

CHAPTER VI

THE SITUATION BEFORE THE WAR

THE defenders of the old régime urge that in the investigation of the question of guilt we must not have regard merely to the few weeks before the war broke out, but also consider the years which preceded them. We have seen that their position is in no way improved by this consideration.

Already, for years before the war, the policy pursued by the Central Powers was such that peace was preserved, not by them but in spite of them. This policy first took definite shape under Prince Bülow. It was continued by Bethmann-Hollweg, under whom it led to the catastrophe. We need not inquire how far these men were themselves springs of action, or how far they were mere agents of their master, who himself was set in motion by those around him, however he flattered himself with the idea that the whole huge mass of the Empire was moved by his hand.

This definite connection is not to be invalidated by pointing to the general imperialistic tendencies then shared by all States. On the other hand, we must not enlarge this definite connection into a generalized statement that to strain after world-dominion, and to seek its goal by brute force, are natural characteristics inherent in the German people.

Imperialistic tendencies are to be found in all the

capitalistic governments of the Great Powers. Whether they cause one or other of these Powers to go to war or not depends on the occasion, the international situation, the resources available (its own and those of its allies), and, not least, on the internal situation; above all, the political force and independence of the working-classes.

It was not always Austria and Germany which imperilled the peace of the world. In the year 1902 I published a work on "The Social Revolution." In this I said:

> "*The only guarantee for peace lies at present in the dread of the revolutionary proletariat. It remains to be seen how long this can hold out against the continual heaping up of causes of conflict. And there are a number of Powers which have as yet no independent revolutionary proletariat to fear, and many of them are completely dominated by a brutal and unscrupulous clique of the High Finance. These Powers, formerly insignificant or peace-loving in regard to international politics, are now coming out more and more as international disturbers of the peace. Chief among these are the United States, and after them England and Japan. Formerly, Russia used to figure as head of the list of peace-disturbers, but her heroic proletariat has for the moment brought her down from this position. But just as war can be enkindled by the arrogance of a régime that knows no restraint from within, and fears no revolutionary class at its back, so can it also come to pass through the despair of a régime which is falling, as was the case with Napoleon III. in* 1870, *and as it will perhaps be the case with Nicolas II.*

It is by these Powers and their opposing views, not by, let us say, the differences between Germany and France or Austria and Italy, that the peace of the world is to-day most deeply endangered. (I. p. 53.)

This was written under the impression made by the war of Japan against China (1894), of America against Spain (1898), and of England against the Boers (1899–1902). And the war between Russia and Japan was already in preparation. The new German policy had then, indeed, been introduced, but its danger had not become clear. Yet in the later editions of my book I struck out the passage which I have just quoted, for the consequences had then begun to ripen, and the more these came into full light, the more the former peace-disturbers ceased to work as such, while the Central Powers stepped into their place.

If we regard imperialistic tendencies as immoral, and believe that in settling the question of guilt we are passing a moral judgment, then we can indeed affirm with justice that Monk and Rabbi, Central Powers and Entente, are all tarred with the same brush. But it is another matter when we are inquiring into the origin of the war as a question not of morality but of causality, and when we ask what particular policy has brought about this particular war. On these lines we shall arrive, not perhaps at a moral but certainly at a political judgment, on particular persons and institutions. But only, let me add, on them ; not on the whole people which was ruled by them, and which, after shaking them off, must naturally develop quite different tendencies.

The "German Professor" made the German people hated in the days of its military supremacy and ridiculous

in the days of its defeat. He represented it as a race of ideal heroes, far superior to the English, whom he treated with scorn as a race of dirty shopkeepers. In point of fact, however, the Germans are no more heroes than any other people; nor, on the other hand, are they more quarrelsome bullies than their enemies in the world-war.

One thing, at any rate, must be admitted: If the opponents of Germany have showed at times the same imperialistic tendencies, the same bent towards war and conquest, then they were not *morally* superior to Germany—a country so intellectual after all, in spite of the German Professor!

One thing they well understood, especially the English and the Americans—they knew very well how to calculate the results of their actions. In the age of Imperialism they only prosecuted a war-policy when that policy did not endanger their own country. They had too much business capacity to conjure up a war when war might mean their own ruin. They were solid capitalists, not reckless adventurers who set all on a single throw. We see, therefore, that it is false to assert that capitalism necessarily means the lust for war with all its perils. It only means that under certain definite conditions.

German capitalism alone grew up under conditions which bound it closely to the most powerful and self-confident militarism in the world. Up to the outbreak of the world-war there was no militarism in the Anglo-Saxon world. France and Russia, indeed, had plenty of it; but neither of these felt confident of victory—the one remembered the crushing defeat of 1870–71, and the other that of 1904–5.

Its connection with the strongest and most arrogant

militarism in the world made German capitalism neglect all sober calculation. That was the sole reason why it not only connived at but urged on with all its might a policy which completely isolated Germany, and at the same time gave the deepest provocation to her neighbours. It lost all sense of what was economically possible, and impelled its Don Quixote, militarism, into a fight against the windmills of the Entente, in which not only the pugnacious knight, but his confiding Sancho Panza too, were left shattered and bleeding on the field.

CHAPTER VII

MATERIALS RELATING TO THE ORIGIN OF THE WAR

THE advocates of the German war-policy constantly lay stress on the point that the "Question of Guilt" ought not to be judged by the events that occurred immediately before the war, and that a "scientific" conception of the situation must reach farther back.

We have seen that by this argument nothing is gained for the German cause. This endeavour to divert investigation from the last weeks before the war, and direct it to earlier periods, merely implies that the events of those last weeks are even more incriminating than those which went before.

Then, however, the advocates of the late German Government, as a happy thought, hit upon a new scientific consideration. Where at first the scientific historian was told to look at things only in their wide connections, now he was told that all one-sided evidence was faulty. So long as all the secret archives of all nations were not laid open, and all the statesmen concerned were not heard as witnesses, it was impossible to form an opinion as to the origin of the war.

Yet those who allege considerations of this kind bear witness to their futility by their own practice, for immediately after the outbreak of the war they exerted themselves to prove that the Central Powers were attacked —nay, were taken by surprise by the Entente.

Up to a certain point they were undeniably right: the world, when confronted with a war, cannot wait till all imaginable material has been brought forward for evidence as to its origin. Every politician, when faced with a war, must take his stand according to the material to which he has access. He must strive to get it as comprehensive as possible—complete it will never be, no more for the politician of the present day than for the historian of a later time. The latter may have access to various secret archives that at present are closed; on the other hand, much evidence will be lost to him that could be gleaned from contemporaries and that was not definitely set down in writing by them.

Although we cannot know everything, for all knowledge comes piecemeal, still it would be folly for this reason to keep from mankind what we do know. Indeed, this folly may become one of those political mistakes that are worse than a crime, if the keeping back of the material should serve to screen a system dangerous to the nation and to mankind, and liable to hinder the exposure of its operations.

There is no lack of material as to the origin of the World War. At its very commencement we were inundated with official White, Red, Yellow, Blue and other coloured books, and the critical treatment of them was soon set on foot. Early in 1915 there appeared Grelling's "J'accuse," which was followed by a continuation in three volumes called "Das Verbrechen" ("The Crime"). With great penetration he succeeded, in very essential points, in striking the right track.

Then especially important were the "Memoirs of Prince Lichnowsky," of August, 1916, which were not intended for publication, but fell into pacifist hands, which soon procured for them a wide underground

circulation. After that there came into consideration the publications of Herr Mühlon.

Anyone who still could not see clearly after all this must have had his eyes opened after the November Revolution by Eisner's publication of the Report from the Bavarian Legation in Berlin of July 18th, 1914. Unfortunately Eisner, by this publication, committed the imprudence of treating it rather as a journalist to whom the effect produced was of chief importance, than as a historian who was concerned as to the completeness and the unimpaired condition of his sources. He brought out the Report in extracts only, and left out passages into which some people desired to read the German Government's love of peace.

We shall see how to estimate the love of peace that is supposed to be expressed in the passages omitted.

New material was then contributed by Austrian and German publications of the Foreign Offices, Red and White Books. This Austrian Red Book, "Diplomatic Documents relating to the Events preceding the War of 1914" (Vienna, 1919), which has already been quoted, and which will be referred to as the Red Book of 1919, affords most important explanations on the question of the authorship of the war. On the other hand, the reader must proceed very critically with this material as worked up by Dr. Roderick Gooss in the form of a book which was published in Vienna at the same time as the above Red Book, under the title of "The Vienna Cabinet and the Origin of the World War." As he was unacquainted with the German documents, the author of the Austrian commentary in places arrives at some very controvertible and even manifestly false conclusions.

Before the Austrian Red Book was published, there

appeared in June a German White Book, intended to make an impression on the victorious nations in favour of Germany during the peace negotiations. In reality, it only helped to compromise anew the German foreign policy. The reason for this we shall see later.

There has since appeared another work which forms the chief source of the following exposition, the collection of documents relating to the authorship of the war, brought together under my superintendence.

Any other material that has been published is supplementary in details, but does not alter the general impression.

According to all this material, how did the course of events really proceed?

CHAPTER VIII

SERAJEVO

WE have brought our statement in Chapter V. up to the Treaty of Bucharest, and have seen that after this peace Vienna was determined to revise it, with the help of Germany, at the first favourable opportunity.

The Central Powers at that time were continually showing signs of great unrest and eagerness for action. Germany prevailed on Turkey to the extent that a German general, Liman von Sanders, went to Constantinople in December, 1913, at the head of a German military mission, and while he was there was appointed to the chief command of the First Army Corps. Russia protested energetically, but only succeeded in getting Liman's title altered to that of General Inspector of the Turkish Army with the rank of Marshal.

Shortly after this, in March, 1914, the Central Powers had the satisfaction of putting one of their own people, the Prince of Wied, on the throne of the newly-formed kingdom of Albania, a success, to be sure, of a very doubtful character, as the German sovereign no later than May deserted his troublesome subjects, and thereby made himself and his protectors ridiculous in the face of Europe.

At the same time meetings between the Emperor William and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand were

multiplied. In April they met at Miramare, and on June 12th at Konopischt in Bohemia.

> "The curiosity of the public and the interest of the diplomats are excited by these manifestations of a friendship which was so animated as to make people restless. During the visit to Konopischt the German Ambassador in London was ordered to pacify the British Foreign Office with regard to the presence of Admiral von Tirpitz in the Kaiser's suite. '*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.*' The Admiral evidently only intended to take this change of air in order to enjoy the fragrance of the roses in Bohemia."

That is how a Belgian diplomat, Baron Beyens, derides the innocence of these meetings in his book: "L'Allemagne avant la guerre, les causes et les responsabilités" (Paris, 1915, page 265). Beyens was at the commencement of the war the Belgian Minister in Berlin, and from thence wrote reports so sympathetic to Germany that the German Government, which came across them after the German troops entered Brussels, published a series of them in the volume, "Belgian Official Documents, 1905–1914." Meanwhile Beyens completely changed his favourable opinion of German policy after the Austrian Ultimatum. The reports he wrote thenceforth have not been published by the Berlin Foreign Office. They are to be found in the "Correspondance diplomatique relative à la guerre de 1914–15" (Paris, 1915).

Notwithstanding Beyens, Herr von Jagow, in his book on "The Causes and Outbreak of the World War" (Berlin, 1919, page 101), says:

> "The Archduke wished to show his imperial friend the rose-blooms on his favourite Bohemian estate."

As to what was hatched at Konopischt, William himself could alone give authentic information. That the meeting was not merely to enjoy the fragrance of the Bohemian roses is testified to by a report which Tschirschky, the German Ambassador in Vienna, sent to the Imperial Chancellor on June 17th, 1914. This report begins with the following communication:

> "Count Berchtold, after the departure of H.M. the Emperor, had been invited by His Highness the Archduke Francis Ferdinand to Konopischt. The Minister told me to-day that His Highness had expressed himself to him as extremely satisfied with His Majesty's visit. He had exhaustively spoken with His Majesty on all possible questions, and could state that they had come to a complete agreement in their views."

Unfortunately the report does not inform us what views these were. From the following we only learn that the policy to be followed with regard to the Rumanians was much discussed. Further, that Francis Ferdinand did not approve of Tisza's Rumanian policy, as Tisza refused to allow any more concessions to the Rumanians in the Hungarian State, to which William in a marginal note remarks:

> "He must not by his home policy, which in the Rumanian question has influence on the foreign policy of the Triple Alliance, do anything to call the latter in question."

It is certain that the Rumanian policy of Hungary made it impossible for the Rumanian Government to part company with Serbia and Russia and face these states in Austria's company.

Directly after the meeting at Konopischt the Foreign Office in Vienna set about preparing a Memorandum to show that the state of affairs in the Balkans was intolerable, and that Austria was forced to oppose Russia, who was planning a Balkan League against the Habsburg Monarchy.

To this end Austria sought to win over Rumania. The latter by this time was on very bad terms with her.

> "The Monarchy up till now has confined itself to discussing in a friendly manner the vacillation of Rumanian policy in Bucharest; beyond this, however, it does not see any reason to look for serious consequences from this change of course, which is becoming more and more pronounced on the part of Rumania. The Vienna Cabinet has in this matter allowed itself to be determined primarily by the fact that the German Government's view was that it was a question of temporary vacillation, the consequences of certain misunderstandings surviving from the time of the crisis, which would settle themselves automatically if treated calmly and patiently. It is evident, however, that these tactics of calm attention and friendly representations had not the desired effect; that the process of estrangement between Austria-Hungary and Rumania had not slackened, but on the contrary had been hastened."

Nor does the Memorandum expect a "favourable turn of affairs in the future."

In this Memorandum, as in the report referring to Konopischt, the Rumanian question stands in the foreground. The Serbian question is hardly touched. Not by any means because the enmity of Austria towards Serbia was less, but no doubt because she came up against no hindrance in Berlin, while the German Government was insisting on a friendly understanding with Rumania. Austria, on the other hand, wishes to give up the policy of "calm attention and friendly representations" towards Serbia and Rumania, and likewise towards Russia.

This State, the Memorandum continues, constituted a danger not merely to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but also to Germany. Russia and her ally, France, were striving "to break the military superiority of the two Empires by auxiliary troops from the direction of the Balkans," and to carry out Russia's policy of expansion in opposition to German interests.

> "For these reasons the directors of the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary are convinced that it is to the common interest of the Monarchy, and no less to that of Germany in the present stage of the Balkan Crisis, to oppose in good time and with energy a development planned and fostered by Russia which later on it would perhaps be impossible to check." (Reprinted in the White Book on "The Responsibility of the Originators of the War," of June, 1919, page 68.)

This Memorandum can hardly mean anything else than, in the language of diplomacy, the demand for a *preventive war* against the empire of the Tsar.

This dangerous document was just ready when the catastrophe of Serajevo occurred.

The heir to the throne had gone from Konopischt to the manœuvres in Bosnia. On this burning soil, which had only a short time before been declared to be annexed, manœuvres were deliberately planned to be held in the presence of Francis Ferdinand, and in connection with them he was to make a triumphant entry, like a conqueror, into the capital of the country. As if it were specially intended to challenge the national feeling, the 28th of June had been chosen as the day for the entry into Serajevo, the "Vidov dan" (St. Vitus' Day), a day of national mourning for the Serbians. On this day, in 1389, on the field of Kossovo, they had suffered a fearful and decisive defeat in a battle against their oppressors, the Turks, and the memory of it survives to this day in the people's songs. This very day was the one on which the foreign ruler from the North chose to make his entry.

And in the true old Austrian manner to this provocation was added an inconsiderateness of action that amounted to frivolity.

If, in a country in which the ruling class practised a fearful terrorism and thereby created an atmosphere of outrage, the heir to the throne was paraded about, care should at least have been taken to protect him.

But nothing was provided for. So great was the stupidity and carelessness shown, that after the first attempt at assassination, which failed, the Archduke and his wife were again allowed to drive through the streets to form easy targets for a second attack.

In a telegram of July 3rd, the Joint Minister of Finance and Supreme Administrator of Bosnia, Dr. von Bilinski, made a severe protest against the thoughtlessness of the responsible authorities, and especially of the military in Bosnia :

> " The other branches of the administration (besides that of Justice) had also disclosed weak points, the knowledge of which ought long before to have dissuaded the Archduke Francis Ferdinand from undertaking this journey. The Provincial Governor (Landeschef), and the Master of the Ordnance, Potiorek, knew quite well that the journey was arranged and put into execution by the Archduke, in exclusive association with the Provincial Governor, from a military point of view. . . .
>
> " Dr. von Bilinski least of all could have assumed that a non-military visit was to be included in the military programme. If Dr. von Bilinski had had any knowledge, from the reports of the Provincial Governor, that the police were quite unequal to their task, it would obviously have been the duty of both of them to prevent the journey under any circumstances." (Gooss, Vienna Cabinet, pages 46, 47.)

Soon afterwards, on July 13th, the Ministerial Councillor von Wiesner, who was dispatched to Serajevo to inspect the documents used in the inquiry connected with the trial of the murderers, telegraphed :

> " Nothing to prove or presume complicity of the Serbian Government in the attack or in its preparation or the supplying of weapons. Rather there are grounds for considering this entirely out of the question."

Thus those who were guilty of this bloody deed were not to be looked for in the Serbian Government ; the responsibility for it lay rather with the ignorance,

the thoughtlessness and the shamelessly provocative methods of Austrian despotism.

The factors which evoked the attempt on the Archduke were the same as those which, in consequence of it, led directly to the far more dreadful attack on the world's peace.

Achilles slaughtered twelve Trojans at the funeral of his friend Patroclus. For the funeral ceremonies of Francis Ferdinand, for four years, many millions of men from all the five continents were slain.

For the rulers of Austria, the killing of the most active upholder of the existing régime ought to have been a Mene-Tekel warning them to reform. It showed plainly what were the fruits of a policy of force, and warned them most urgently to substitute for this policy one of liberty and reconciliation as the only one that could give any vitality to a state system on the point of collapse.

But when has any despotism ever regarded such a writing on the wall ? It felt itself rather urged to an aggravated terrorism, and to the employment of methods of violence not only against its Croatian and Bosnian subjects but also against the neighbouring Serbian State, which was now devoted to complete destruction.

Before Wiesner's report on the authorship of the outrage had arrived, the rulers at Vienna had already formulated their resolve to make the Serbian Government responsible for the deed, according to the principle : "Give a dog a bad name and hang him."

CHAPTER IX

WILLIAM'S MONARCHICAL CONSCIENCE

IN the memorandum drawn up immediately before the crime at Serajevo, it was in regard to Rumanian affairs that Austria had shown herself chiefly concerned. Now, however, Serbia moves into the foreground. That country had only received an incidental mention in the text of the document. A postscript was now added, as follows:

> "The present memorandum had only just been drawn up when the dreadful events of Serajevo took place. To estimate the full significance of this wicked deed is hardly possible as yet. It may, however, be said that in any case the impossibility of bridging the gulf between the Monarchy and Serbia is now demonstrated, as well as the danger and intensity of the Great-Serbian movement, which shrinks from nothing to attain its ends.
>
> "All the more imperative is the necessity for the Monarchy to tear asunder in the most resolute manner the net which its opponents are endeavouring to weave over its head."

In other words, Austria, or, rather, Count Berchtold and his associates, were resolved on a war against Serbia, and if necessary also against Russia.

In the face of this situation, what position did the German Government take up? Up to the present, no clear answer to this question could have been given. Did it allow itself to be dragged in tow by Austria without knowing exactly where it was going, or did it act with Austria willingly, energetically, and in full consciousness of what was afoot?

We find that its attitude in regard to Austrian policy in the Balkans was profoundly altered by the outrage at Serajevo.

When, in 1913, Rumania entered upon the second Balkan war in league with Serbia, the Hohenzollern Carol of Rumania had the Hohenzollern William of Germany covering his rear against the Habsburg. On that occasion Berlin was urging Vienna to hold back.

Thus, on July 2nd, 1914, Berchtold remarked to Tschirschky:

> "When Rumania, without reference to us, and, as she well knew, against our interests, leagued herself with Serbia and fell upon the defenceless Bulgaria, Germany protected Rumania, and gave us to understand that we were not to move." (Red Book, 1919, p. 19.)

But after Serajevo, the wrath of Austria was not directed against Rumania and Serbia combined; it was wholly concentrated on the latter. And the Serbian Government, Monarchy as it was, now figured in William's eyes as the abettor and originator of regicide. His dynastic feeling, which had saved Rumania from Austria, now urged Austria as strongly against Serbia. Did he not abandon the projected visit of condolence to Vienna on July 2nd because

hints from Serajevo had inspired him with the fear that a horde of Serbian assassins awaited him in the Austrian capital?

The instant he heard of the crime, he sprang without the least hesitation to the same conclusion as that which Francis Joseph expressed in his personal letter to William, received by the latter on July 5th:

> "*It must be the future task of my Government to bring about the isolation and diminution of Serbia.*"

And it closed with the words:

> "*You also will, after this last and most terrible occurrence in Bosnia, have come to the conclusion that there can be no longer any thought of a reconciliation of the opposition between Serbia and ourselves, and that the continued peace-policy of all European monarchs will be threatened so long as this horde of criminal agitators in Belgrade are allowed to live unpunished.*"

But even before this letter had reached Potsdam, William had decided that, whatever the consequences might be, Serbia must be laid low. By the shots at Serajevo his monarchical sympathies had been inflamed into a stormy passion for mortal vengeance on this race of murderers. Prince Lichnowsky was in Berlin during the days following the outrage. He reports a conversation with Zimmermann, who was then representing Jagow in the absence of the latter:

> "One would gather from his words an unmistakably unfriendly feeling towards Russia, which

stood in our way in every direction. . . . I was, of course, not told that General von Moltke was urging on war. I did, however, learn that Herr von Tschirschky had been reprimanded because he reported that he had recommended moderation to Vienna in her dealings with Serbia." ("Meine Londoner Mission," p. 27.)

Lichnowsky's statements are confirmed by the documents of the Berlin Foreign Office. We reproduce a report which Tschirschky addressed to the Imperial Chancellor on June 30th. Its importance lies in the marginal comments of the Kaiser, which we insert in square brackets, marked with a "W."

"Count Berchtold told me to-day that, according to all appearances, the threads of the conspiracy to which the Archduke fell a victim could be traced to Belgrade. The affair was so well thought out, that intentionally only young people were charged with the execution of the deed, because their punishment would be milder **[Let us hope not!—W.]**. The Minister spoke very bitterly about the incitements proceeding from Serbia.

"Here, even serious people are saying that accounts with Serbia must be settled once for all. **[Now or never.—W.]** A series of demands must be presented to Serbia, and in case she does not accept them energetic steps must be taken. I use every occasion of this kind in order to warn our friends quietly, but very emphatically and seriously, against taking any over-hasty steps. **[Who gave him any authority to do that? That is very stupid! No affair of his, since it is purely**

> **Austria's affair what she thinks fit to do in this matter. Afterwards they will say, if things go wrong, 'Germany would not let us!' Tschirschky must kindly avoid this nonsense. Serbia must be settled with, and that soon.—W.]**
>
> "Above all things, people must be clear as to what it is they want, for all the sentiments I have heard expressed up to the present have been very confused. Then the possible outcome of each course of action must be carefully weighed, and Austria-Hungary must realize that she does not stand alone in the world, and that besides consideration due to her Allies she must take into account, in relation to all Serbian questions, the general situation in Europe, and especially the attitude of Italy and Rumania. **[All this is obvious, and mere platitudes.—W.]**"

This document came back from the Kaiser to the Foreign Office on July 4th. Thus we see that even at that stage, and before Austria had made a demand of any description whatever, William was resolved that "the Serbians must be settled with, and that soon."

The idea which has found much support in Gooss's book, that Germany was merely dragged into the Serbian crisis in the wake of Austria, in whom she had confided too much, falls wholly to the ground.

CHAPTER X

THE CONSPIRACY OF POTSDAM

ON July 4th, the Austrian Councillor of Legation, Count Hoyos, came to Berlin in order to present to William the personal letter from the Emperor Francis Joseph to which we have already referred. Dangerous ideas are not always set down fully on paper. The letter had gone so far as to speak of a " diminution " of Serbia. Count Hoyos verbally explained this expression as meaning that Serbia was to be divided up amongst her neighbours. Hoyos, who was in the confidence of Berchtold, expounded these plans to the Imperial Chancellor and to the Under Secretary Zimmermann. They saw in this no occasion for exerting a restraining influence on the Austrians.

The White Book of June, 1919, which we have mentioned above and which in reality deserves to be called a whitewashing book, remarks indeed :

> " *The Viennese Ministry for Foreign Affairs later on thought it important to put on record that they did not share the purely personal views of Count Hoyos in regard to the acquisition of Serbian territory or still more the partition of Serbia.*"

This piece of information is not quite accurate. The Ministry did indeed declare that Count Hoyos' views

were his own personally, but it never declared positively that its own were different; nor could it do so for the simple reason that the views of the Councillor of Legation were exactly the same as those of his chief, the Minister Berchtold. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna has never indeed betrayed its own views in relation to Serbia. And even if the mere removal of Hoyos were equivalent to a calming declaration of Austria's purposes, this did not take place until *later*, until after July 5th, the day on which the Austrian Ambassador handed to the Kaiser the letter of Francis Joseph, and on which the decisive conclusions were come to.

Much has been conjectured about the counsels formed on that day, concerning which the imagination of the world has been all the more enkindled because so little is known about them. There is supposed to have been a Crown-Council in Potsdam in which the Archduke Frederick, Count Berchtold, and Conrad von Hötzendorff took part, and at which war on Serbia, or perhaps even the world-war, was decided on. The White Book of June, 1919, argues that this Council is a myth. As a proof of this, it cites Sir Horace Rumbold, English Ambassador in Berlin at the time of war, who held it improbable that such a Council of the Crown could have taken place. He comes to this opinion not on account of, but in spite of the protestations of the German Government.

> "So great is the usual tendency of the German Government to lying, that I am involuntarily tempted to believe whatever assertions they deny."

It is on this honourable testimony that the White Book of June, 1919, relies for proof of the innocence of the former German Government. The White Book

then itself informs us what is supposed to have taken place on July 5th in Potsdam. It repeats substantially what the weekly paper *Deutsche Politik* had published on the subject in May. This narrative sounds very harmless.

According to it, the Austrian Ambassador Szögyeny breakfasted on July 5th with the Kaiser William in Potsdam, and handed him the letter of his sovereign.

Afterwards Bethmann-Hollweg and Zimmermann (who represented Jagow, then on his honeymoon) came to the Kaiser and discussed the political situation. Next day Kaiser William started on his Northern trip. Plainly the clearest symptom that he was neither planning nor expecting mischief.

The White Book gives a similar account, only without mentioning the Northern trip. Instead of this it adds:

> "*No particular measures were decided on, since it was already understood that it was not possible to refuse to Austria, in prosecuting her claim to effective guarantees from Serbia, the support demanded by our obligations as an ally.*" (Page 50.)

This also sounds harmless enough, yet it can imply nothing else than that, in this consultation, the German Government found it a matter of course that Austria should demand "effective guarantees"—we know what that means—and that Germany would join in, in accordance with her obligations as an ally. To decide on special measures *about these points* seems to have been quite superfluous on July 5th!

The White Book of June, 1919, appears to reckon on a very child-like public. It introduces its study of

the subject by disputing the assertion that a Crown-Council took place on July 5th " which decided on war with Serbia, or, according to another version, on the world-war." But the study which is supposed to set us right only declares :

(1) That no Crown-Council took place, but merely individual conversations.
(2) That the *world-war* was not decided on. (There is no mention of the war *with Serbia*.)

It concludes as follows :

" *From the telegram (of the German Government) to Vienna of July 6th, and the personal letter of the Kaiser William of July 14th, it is clear that in Berlin the possibility of Russian intervention and its consequences were taken into account with other factors, but that a general war was not considered in the least probable. And as the attached documents indisputably show, there could have been no intention of letting loose a European war.*" (Page 57.)

Lichnowsky reports on this in his memorandum :

" *I learned positively that at the critical conference in Potsdam on July 5th, the inquiry addressed to us by Vienna found the most uncompromising affirmation from all the leading men present,* and in addition it was thought that it would be no harm even if the result should be a war with Russia. So at least it appears from the Austrian protocol which Count Mensdorff received in London." (Page 28.)

Count Szögyeny, Austrian Ambassador in Berlin, reports on his conversation with William on July 5th :

> "According to his (Kaiser William's) opinion action (against Serbia) must not be delayed too long. Russia will, in any case, take up a hostile attitude, but he had for years been prepared for this; and should it come to a war between Austria-Hungary and Russia, we might be assured that Germany would, with her usual fidelity, be found at our side. Moreover, as matters now stand, Russia is by no means prepared for war, and will think long before appealing to arms. She will, however, stir up the other Entente Powers against us and will fan the flames in the Balkans.
>
> "He understood very well that His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, with his well-known love of peace, would find it hard to decide on a march into Serbia; but when we had once recognized the necessity of taking action against Serbia, he (Kaiser William) would regret that we should not seize the present favourable moment." (Red Book, 1919, I., page 22.)

Dr. Gooss endeavours to question whether Count Szögyeny was capable of giving a correct account of the matter. And all the four authors of a memorial on the guilt of the outbreak of war in the White Book of June, 1919—Professors Hans Delbrück and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Max Weber and Count Montgelas—harp on the same string.

We shall come to speak of this in another connection later on; for the present let us merely remark that the communications of the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin are in absolute agreement with what we know of William's ideas at this period and what his marginal comments on Tschirschky's report have already made clear to us.

But chance has given us, out of these very days, a witness to Szögyeny's capacity for rendering an accurate report. On the 6th, the Count had a discussion with Bethmann-Hollweg. The latter reported it to Tschirschky and Szögyeny sent at the same time a report of the same interview to Berchtold. The following day Tschirschky had occasion to compare the two reports. He telegraphed about them to the Foreign Office on July 7th :

> "The reports of Count Szögyeny corresponded exactly with the contents of the regular telegram sent me by your Excellency on the 6th of the month."

It is not so easy, therefore, to put this inconvenient witness morally out of the way.

It is true that in these discussions Bethmann expressed himself far more cautiously than his Imperial master. But that was often the case.

One perhaps not irrelevant circumstance may be mentioned. Szögyeny reports that before breakfast William was very reserved. It was not till after breakfast that he opened the murder-chamber of his heart.

We are not informed as to how the Kaiser discussed affairs with his people after this consultation. But we may believe the White Book of June, however little confidence it deserves, when it says that there was then no intention of letting loose *a European war*. Only it passes in silence over the fact that Austria was then given a free hand in the war against Serbia, even at the peril of bringing with it a war with Russia.

In substance the German Government had already admitted this in the first White Book published at the beginning of the war. They then said :

"Austria must have owned to herself that it was no longer consistent with her dignity nor with the maintenance of the monarchy to look on inactive at what was going on beyond the frontier. The Imperial and Royal Government informed us of this view and asked for our opinion. We could most heartily assure our ally that we shared her estimate of the situation, and that any action which she held necessary to make an end of the Serbian movement against the monarchy would have our approval. We were fully conscious in saying this that any warlike action of Austria-Hungary against Serbia might bring Russia on the scene and thus, in accordance with the obligations of our alliance, entangle us in war."

It would have been thoughtless to the last degree if Bethmann and the Kaiser, on the 5th of July, had really not looked ahead and considered the possibility of a European war which they were conjuring up by their procedure.

It is certainly remarkable that the Kaiser should have started on a cruise to the North in the midst of such a threatening situation. One thing, however, is clear: the most frivolous of sovereigns would not have dared to do that without having first assured himself that the defences of the State were prepared for all possible emergencies. The fact that after the Council at Potsdam he started on his summer cruise indicates what had been decided on at this Council.

If William and Bethmann-Hollweg, as the latter himself declared, had there and then given their assent to "warlike measures on the part of Austria-Hungary," at the peril of being involved in a war with Russia, the

decks must have been cleared for action before William set out towards the Midnight Sun.

It is thus by no means surprising that we should find a "Memorandum of the Under-Secretary of State, Freiherr von der Bussche, for the Secretary of State Zimmermann," dated August 30th, 1917. In this we read:

> "In July, 1914, on the same day [July 5], after the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador had handed His Majesty the Emperor the letter of the Emperor Francis Joseph, which had been brought by Count Hoyos, and after the Imperial Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg and the Secretary of State Zimmermann had been received at Potsdam, there took place at Potsdam a council of military authorities before His Majesty. The following took part: His Excellency Capelle, on behalf of Tirpitz, Captain Zenker, for the Admirals' Staff, representatives of the War Office and of the General Staff. It was resolved, in preparation for all emergencies, to take preparatory steps for a war. Orders in agreement with this have thereupon been issued.—A thoroughly reliable source.
>
> "BUSSCHE."

The information given by Herr von Tirpitz in his "Memoirs" (1919, page 209) points in the same direction. He reports that William, with all his optimism, found it necessary to be armed for all eventualities:

> "For this reason, on the 5th he commanded the Imperial Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, von Falkenhayn the Minister of War, Zimmermann, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,

> and von Lyncker, the Chief of the Military Cabinet, to come to Potsdam. It was there resolved that measures should be avoided which would tend to give rise to political sensation, or would cause special expenditure."

Then on July 6th the Emperor had a conversation at Potsdam with Capelle, who was acting for Tirpitz, at that time absent.

This, to the smallest details, is what Bussche notes down. By this the darkness which hangs over the "Separate Conversations" at Potsdam is not yet fully removed. They certainly could not be called Crown Councils. On the contrary, according to all appearances William decided independently in this fatal hour. What followed might rather be described as a *Council of War*. It might also be called a *conspiracy* against Serbia and Russia at the least, if not against the peace of the world.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONSPIRATORS AT WORK

WILLIAM'S INSISTENCE

HOW the harmless conversation on "the political situation" held at Potsdam on July 5th worked on the Austrian Government was already manifested by the latter in the Council of the Ministry for Common Interests, held on July 7th, the protocol of which has now been published (Red Book, 1919, pp. 25–38).

Berchtold began by declaring that the moment had arrived to make Serbia for ever incapable of doing mischief. On this question he had been in touch with the German Government, and the latter had promised their unreserved support in a war with Serbia.

> "He was clear that military action against Serbia might lead to war with Russia."

But better have it now than later on, for Russia's strength in the Balkans was always growing.

Tisza agreed that there was a possibility of a war with Serbia, but he was neither in favour of a war under all circumstances nor of a declaration of war without diplomatic preparation.

> "He would never agree to a surprise attack on Serbia without previous diplomatic action, as it

> seemed to be contemplated, and as it was unfortunately also discussed by Count Hoyos in Berlin."

So it appears that in Berlin it had even been discussed whether war should be declared on Serbia without any ultimatum. Tisza prevented that. He knew too well that such a proceeding would at the very outset put Austria in the wrong. He wanted an ultimatum—and one that could be carried out. If Serbia were to accept it, a great diplomatic success would have been obtained, and with that one could be content.

After a long discussion it was finally concluded:

> "(1) That all present desired as speedy a settlement as possible of the case at issue with Serbia, whether by peace or war.
>
> "(2) That the Ministerial Council was willing to adhere to the view of the Hungarian Premier, according to which mobilization should not take place until concrete demands had been made on Serbia, and an Ultimatum presented.
>
> "On the other hand, all present, with the exception of the Hungarian Premier, are of opinion that a mere diplomatic success, even if it involved a humiliation of Serbia, would be worthless, and that in consequence the demands on Serbia should be of so far-reaching a character that their rejection was to be anticipated; so that the way would be made clear for a radical settlement by military action."

This pretty scheme was the result of the discussion of the "political situation" held in Potsdam on July 5th. It was at once reported to Berlin, in Tschirschky's

message of July 8th, in which, among other things, he wrote :

> "Count Berchtold said, in case the Emperor agreed to make demands on Serbia, he would advise him by all means to draw up these in such a way as to preclude their acceptance."

So that Berlin was informed upon this subject from the beginning.

William did not merely approve this policy—he urged its speedy execution ; a fact proved by his annotations on Tschirschky's reports from Vienna.

The latter reports on July 10th :

> "[*Strictly private.*]
>
> "With regard to his audience of yesterday with H.M. the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl, Count Berchtold gives me the following information :
>
> "H.M. the Emperor discussed the state of affairs very calmly. He first expressed his warm thanks for the position taken by our Most Gracious Sovereign and the Imperial Government, and declared he was entirely of our opinion that one must *now* [Underlined by William.—K.] come to a decision **[As His Majesty's Memorandum is about fourteen days old that will take a long time ! It was evidently drawn up as a basis for the actual decision.—W.]** in order to put an end to the intolerable state of affairs with regard to Serbia. On the significance of such a decision, Count Berchtold adds, His Majesty is quite clear.
>
> "The Minister hereupon informed the Emperor

of the two methods of procedure which were here in question with regard to the approaching action against Serbia. His Majesty had suggested that perhaps this opposition could be bridged over. On the whole, His Majesty was rather inclined to the opinion that concrete demands should be made on Serbia. **[Very much so, and unambiguously!—W.]** He, the Minister, would not fail to appreciate the advantages of such steps. They would thereby avoid the odium of taking Serbia by surprise, an odium which would fall on the Monarchy, and Serbia would be placed in the wrong. These measures would also make a neutral attitude easier both for Rumania and for England.

"The drawing up of suitable demands on Serbia is at present the chief concern here. **[They have had plenty of time for that!—W.]** Count Berchtold said he would like to know what Berlin was thinking on the subject. He thought that among other things an agency of the Austrian Government could be established in Belgrade to keep an eye upon the Great Serbian intrigues and possibly see to the breaking up of associations and the dismissal of some **[All.—W.]** of the compromised officers. The time allowed for reply must be the shortest possible, probably forty-eight hours. Of course, even this short time would be sufficient in Belgrade to get instructions from St. Petersburg. **[Hartwig is dead!—W.]** If the Serbians should accept all the demands presented to them, that would be a solution which would be 'very disagreeable' to him, and he was thinking what demands could be presented which would be completely impossible for Serbia to accept. **[Evacuate the Saniak!**

Then you will have a row at once! Austria must by all means get this back at once and so prevent the union of Serbia and Montenegro and Serbia's reaching the sea.—W.]

"In conclusion, the Minister again complained of the attitude of Count Tisza, which made it difficult for him to take energetic measures against Serbia. Count Tisza maintained that one must proceed in a 'gentlemanlike' manner. **[Against murderers, after what has taken place?—W.]** This, however, was a very difficult course to take when such important interests of State were in question, and especially against such an opponent as Serbia.

"The Minister would willingly follow the suggestion of the Imperial Government, to start at once to tune up public opinion at home through the Press against Serbia, about which Count Szögyeny has telegraphed. This, however, in his opinion, must be done with caution, so as not to alarm Serbia prematurely.

"The Minister of War is going away on leave to-morrow, and Freiherr Conrad von Hötzendorf will also go away from Vienna for a time. This is being done, as Count Berchtold told me, on purpose **[Childish!—W.]**, so as to prevent any cause of alarm. **[Much the same as at the time of the Silesian Wars. 'I am opposed to Councils of War and deliberations, since the more timid party always gets the upper hand' (Frederick the Great.)—W.]**"

One can see from William's marginal comments his approval that it should be made impossible for Serbia to submit, but also his impatience that Austria is not yet

attacking. Finally, on July 13th, the inert mass of Austria seems to be in motion. Tschirschky reports :

> "The Minister [Berchtold.—K.] is now himself convinced that what is now required is action of the speediest kind. [Doubly underlined by William. —K.] He hopes to settle with Tisza to-morrow as to the wording of the Note to be presented to Serbia, and would then submit it on Wednesday, July 15th, to the Emperor at Ischl, upon which its transmission to Belgrade could take place without delay, and consequently before the departure of Poincaré to St. Petersburg."

As chance would have it, just at this time the President of the French Republic was paying the Tsar a visit in his capital. The Note was to be dispatched to Serbia before Poincaré started (he left Paris on the evening of July 15th).

But, for all that, the Austrians were not able to shoot so quickly. Meanwhile Berchtold and William first noted down the triumph of having converted Tisza to their views.

Tschirschky telegraphed on July 14th, "strictly private" :

> "Count Tisza called on me to-day, after his conference with Count Berchtold. The Count said : Up to now he had always been the one who had urged the necessity of caution, but every day had confirmed his opinion that the Monarchy must come to an energetic decision **[Absolutely !—W.]**, to prove that it had vital energy, and to put an end to the untenable state of things in the south-

east. The language used by the Serbian Press and the Serbian diplomats was, in its presumption, positively unbearable. 'It has been difficult for me,' said Tisza, 'to bring myself to advise in favour of war; but I am now convinced of its necessity, and will be responsible to the utmost of my power for the maintenance of the greatness of the Monarchy!'

"Fortunately complete agreement and determination now prevail among the authorities here. His Majesty the Emperor Francis Joseph—as Baron Burian, who recently spoke with His Majesty at Ischl, reports—is considering the situation very calmly, and will certainly see things through to the very end. Count Tisza added that the unconditional attitude of Germany to the Monarchy was decidedly of great influence for the firm stand of the Emperor [of Austria].

"The Note to be addressed to Serbia is not to-day to be drawn up in its final wording. This will not be done till Sunday (July 19th). With respect to the date of presenting it to Serbia, it has to-day been decided rather to wait till after the departure of Poincaré from St. Petersburg—that is, till the 25th. **[What a pity!—W.]** Then immediately after the expiration of the time allowed to Serbia, in case the latter should not unconditionally accept all demands, the mobilization would take place. The Note will be so drawn up that its acceptance will be practically impossible. [Doubly underlined by William.—K.] It would be a matter not only of demanding assurances and promises, but of deeds. In drawing up the Note, in his opinion, care must be taken that it is intelligible to the general public

—especially in England—and that Serbia is clearly and plainly put in the wrong.

" Baron Conrad at the last conference had made a very good impression on him. He spoke calmly and very positively. In the near future one must certainly be prepared to hear people again complain that we are undecided and hesitating here. It is, however, of little importance if they know in Berlin.

" At the close Tisza pressed my hand warmly and said : ' We will now unitedly look the future calmly and firmly in the face.' **[A man, after all! —W.]** "

One can see how completely untenable the opinion is that William was the innocent victim of Berchtoldian perfidy. The two confederates were worthy of one another. And like master, like man.

On July 18th the Secretary to the Embassy, Prince zu Stolberg-Wernigerode, as representative of the absent Tschirschky, reported from Vienna to Jagow :

" Yesterday I was with Berchtold, who told me that the Note in question is to be presented in Belgrade on the 23rd. As I reported yesterday, Berchtold hopes that the Austrian demands, about which he did not go into detail, will not be accepted by Serbia. He is, however, not quite sure, and from his statements and from those of Hoyos I have the impression that Serbia can accept the demands. To my question as to what was to happen if the affair should peter out in this manner, Berchtold thought that when it came to carrying into practice the separate postulates a considerable latitude could be exercised. If a final clearing-up of the relations with Serbia is really desired here,

> a thing which is imperative, as Count Tisza has shown in his speech recently, it is certainly mysterious why one should not have formulated such demands as would make a breach with Serbia unavoidable. If the matter comes to nothing, like the shooting at Hornberg, and stops at a so-called diplomatic success, the idea already prevailing in this country, that the Monarchy is no longer capable of any exhibition of strength, will be strongly confirmed. The consequences that this will have at home and abroad are very obvious."

The representatives of German diplomacy in Vienna were thus not quite satisfied with Berchtold, and had not complete confidence in him. Not, however, because he had urged on war, and they had warned against it, but because they feared that "the Monarchy" was *no longer capable of any "exhibition of strength," and the whole business*, instead of ending with a rattling good war (*mit einem frisch-fröhlichem Krieg*) would end with a bloodless diplomatic victory.

Unfortunately the fears which the Secretary to the German Embassy expressed to the German Secretary of State with regard to their Austrian ally were completely without foundation.

AUSTRIA'S HESITATION

After the German Government had, on July 5th, given its blessing to the war planned by Austria against Serbia, it insisted on attacking as quickly as possible. It was, however, no easy matter to stir Austria out of her easy-going ways.

This was entirely contradictory to the rules of Prussian militarism, which places the greatest value on swiftness of movement. It, however, also threatened to ruin the diplomatic conception of the situation, which was that Europe should be confronted with accomplished facts before it was well aware what had happened, while it would be difficult for Serbia to come to an understanding with the Powers and for the Powers to come to an understanding with one another. Consternation and confusion were to make it possible to fish in troubled waters, and to lessen the danger of the Powers uniting against the impious disturbers of the peace.

This is the reason for the short time-limit which was to be given the Serbians for answering the Note.

Under the circumstances it appeared to be dangerous to delay sending off the Note, as every day of hesitation might bring new incidents, might expose the aims of the conspirators, and so bring them to nought. The insistency of Germany, after she had once given her consent to the war, is therefore quite intelligible.

But the delay on the part of Austria is not so intelligible. It may partly be attributed to the inveterate Austrian slovenliness, and partly perhaps to the delay, arising from this, of the preparations for war which had begun in Austria immediately after the decisions of Potsdam. On July 12th Jagow telegraphed to Tschirschky:

> "Strictly confidential instructions for Count Berchtold.
>
> "According to secret intelligence, Russia and Serbia have obtained confidential information that Austria-Hungary is quietly strengthening her garrisons on the Serbian and Russian frontiers."

Thus not only on the Serbian frontier, but also on the Russian, Austria was making preparations for war.

This is of great importance in view of the discussions with regard to the various mobilizations. Mobilization is the most important, the most conspicuous and the ultimate act of preparation for war, but it is not the only one. There are also movements of troops, assembling and transport of munitions of war, and recall of officers on leave. Means of transport and similar things can be placed in readiness before the mobilization is announced. The latter will take place the more rapidly and effectively, the better the rest of the preparations for war are carried out. The Central Powers in this respect were able, on the outbreak of war on July 24th, to be far ahead of the others, because ever since the 5th they had counted on the possibility of war with Russia.

In spite of this, Austria was much more behindhand than was agreeable to the German war-politicians. After all, she finally declared war on Russia only on the 6th of August, notwithstanding that she had ordered the general mobilization as early as July 31st. To add to this, differences of opinion arose between the statesmen of the dual State of Austria-Hungary, which was so little a homogeneous entity that its politicians knew no other name for it than "the Monarchy."

Berchtold, as far back as July 5th, had got permission for the war from Potsdam, but only on July 14th could Tschirschky report that Budapest, too, had given its unreserved consent. And only then did the Ministers in Vienna begin to attempt to come to an understanding with one another with regard to Serbia. It is remarkable that before this even Berlin had not felt the need of being clear as to the object of the war which had

already been approved of, and the opening of which was being urged on.

Not till July 17th did Jagow telegraph to Tschirschky:

> "As Your Excellency is aware from reading the Memorandum of Count Hoyos with reference to his conference with the Under-Secretary of State, Count Hoyos has here declared that Austria must proceed to a complete partition of Serbia.
>
> "Count Berchtold and Count Tisza have remarked in this connection that this declaration only expressed the personal view of Count Hoyos, and they therefore have expressly not identified themselves with it; on the other hand, they have not apparently explained themselves any further as to their territorial plans.
>
> "For the diplomatic treatment of the conflict with Serbia, it would not be unimportant to know from the beginning what the ideas of Austro-Hungarian statesmen are as to the future conformation of Serbia. This question will be of essential influence on the attitude of Italy, and on the public opinion and attitude of England.
>
> "That the plans of the statesmen of the Monarchy of the Danube may be influenced and modified by the march of events can be looked upon as self-evident; nevertheless, it should be assumed that the Vienna Cabinet, after all, has in its mind a general picture of the aims striven after, not forgetting the territorial aspects of the question. Will Your Excellency be so good as to try in conversation with Count Berchtold to get enlightenment in this matter, but at the same time to avoid

giving the impression that we wish to place hindrances in the way of Austrian action or prescribe limits or aims for it. What we really want is some guidance as to whereabouts the road we are on is likely to lead us."

This is certainly a most remarkable document.

Only think! On July 5th the German Government sanctions the war against Serbia, aware that it may turn into a World War. Since then it urges for a speedy attack, and on the 17th the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Vienna timidly inquires whether he "could have some guidance as to whereabouts the road" of the war "was likely to lead them."

And he asks this, not in order that he may frame his own decisions accordingly—for Austria always had, and has still, a free hand—but merely to be able to "deal with" Italy and England correctly from the diplomatic standpoint.

In this matter Berlin never got a clear answer from Vienna, for the simple reason that there they did not themselves know "where the road was likely to lead them." The two Central Powers unchained the most frightful of all wars without even being clear as to the aim and object of its origination.

The answer was to be given in Vienna on July 19th in a Ministerial Council for "Joint Affairs" on "the approaching diplomatic action against Serbia," in which was to be stated the object of the war which it was determined to force on. In that sitting Count Tisza formulated the demand that the action against Serbia should not be attended with any plans of conquest in favour of the Monarchy. They must limit themselves to rectifications of the frontier required on military

grounds. He asked for a unanimous decision on this point. As a Magyar, he wished for no increase in the number of Serbians in the Monarchy.

Count Berchtold was of a different opinion. He thought it was only with certain reserves that he could associate himself with this conception of the matter. He was also of the opinion that Austria-Hungary should annex no territory belonging to Serbia, but, on the other hand, should assign *as large pieces as possible* to Bulgaria, Greece and Albania, and possibly also to Rumania. Serbia must be so *reduced in size* "that she would no longer be a source of danger." The situation in the Balkans might, however, change. It might be "that at the end of the war it will no longer be possible for us to avoid annexation."

One can see that the views which Count Hoyos had unfolded in Berlin on July 5th were not only his own personal views, but were just as much those of Count Berchtold.

Count Tisza, however, did not admit the reservations of Count Berchtold. Count Stürgkh thought that, even if the occupation of Serbian territory were out of the question, security could be obtained by the *deposition of the dynasty*, by a *military convention*, or by other suitable measures. As the Minister of War showed himself to be willing to guarantee the limitation of the annexation to strategic rectifications of the frontier and to the permanent occupation of a bridge-head across the Save, it was unanimously decided by the Ministers assembled :

> "That immediately at the beginning of the war it shall be declared to the Foreign Powers that the Monarchy is not waging a war of conquest, and has

no intention of incorporating the kingdom with her own territory. Strategic rectifications of the frontier which may be necessary, as well as the diminution in size of Serbia in favour of other States, or a temporarily necessary occupation of Serbian territory, are naturally not excluded by this resolution" (Red Book of 1919, pp. 65–67).

Of the whole of this programme the Powers were, as a matter of precaution, only informed of the first sentence, that "the Monarchy is not waging a war of conquest." The sentences following were suppressed, and these, in reality, contained the disclaimed programme of Count Hoyos, and also did not exclude the reservation of Count Berchtold, which he had so finely clothed in the words: "At the end of the war it may no longer be possible for us to avoid annexation."

Tisza, strange to say, was quite in agreement with this arrangement. His object for waging war was not the *conquest* but the *annihilation* of Serbia. Such, then, was the direction in which the war was "likely" to lead, according to the intentions of the guiding spirits of the Austrian State.

In what direction it really led was explained to the Imperial Chancellor immediately before this, on July 16th, by Prince Lichnowsky in an admirable *exposé* which may be quoted here in its entirety.

Lichnowsky wrote:

"From Count Berchtold's standpoint it is quite comprehensible that he should aim at restoring his position, which was badly shaken by the Peace of Bucharest, and also the influence of the Monarchy in the Balkans, which was diminished through the

defection of Rumania, by making use of the present comparatively favourable opportunity for a passage-of-arms with Serbia. The military authorities in Austria, as is well known, have for a long time been insisting on the need of strengthening the reputation of the Monarchy by a war. Once it was to be against Italy, in order to drive out her irredentism; another time it was to be against Serbia, who by warlike achievements *à la* Prince Eugene was to be forced to renounce her evil ways and be taught better manners. I can quite understand, as I have said, this standpoint of those in control of the Austrian State, and in their position would perhaps have used the Serbian disturbances even earlier than they did to give the South Slav question a Habsburg solution.

"The first thing to be presumed for such a policy, however, would be a clear programme, which rests on the recognition that the present state of things with regard to public and international justice within the Serbo-Croatian family of nations—which assigns one part of this nation, split up only by religion and not by race, to the Austrian State, another part to the Hungarian State, a third to the Joint Monarchy, and finally a fourth and a fifth to independent kingdoms—is permanently untenable. For the endeavour to maintain the sacred *status quo* under all circumstances for reasons of convenience has often enough, and just lately at the recent Balkan crisis, led to a complete collapse of the political house of cards built on these foundations.

"In the first place, I now doubt whether there has been drawn up in Vienna a plan on a great scale which alone would afford the basis of a permanent

regulation of the South Slav question. I mean Trialism, with the inclusion of Serbia. From my knowledge of the conditions there, I do not even believe that they are in a position to proceed to a constitutional re-shaping of the Monarchy on such lines. For to do this it would be necessary to overcome the opposition of Hungary, which would resist to the uttermost the cession of Croatia and Fiume. And Vienna never produces the strong personality alone capable of carrying out such a programme. They only seek there to satisfy the needs of the moment, and are glad when the many political difficulties, which are never extinguished, as they arise from the heterogeneous nature of the component factors of the Empire, are so far pushed aside that there is a prospect of dragging on a few months longer.

"A military castigation of Serbia would hence be of no value towards a satisfactory solution of the so extremely difficult South Slav Question. The most it could do would be to revive the Eastern Question, which has been settled with so much difficulty, merely in order to afford a moral satisfaction to Austria.

"Whether Russia and Rumania will idly look on at this, and leave Austria a free hand, Your Excellency will be in a better position to judge than I am. From the impressions I have received here, but especially from the confidential conversations which I have had with Sir Edward Grey, I believe that I was right in the opinions I recently represented in Berlin with regard to the intentions of Russia towards us. Sir Edward Grey assures me that no one in Russia has any desire to wage war

against us. The same was said to me by my cousin Count Benckendorff. A certain anti-German feeling recurs there from time to time; this is connected with the Slav movement. Against this tendency, however, there stands opposed a strong pro-German party. Neither the Tsar nor anyone in high authority is anti-German, and since the settlement of the Liman question no serious discord has arisen. On the other hand, Count Benckendorff openly admitted that there exists a strong anti-Austrian feeling in Russia. No one, however, has any desire to conquer parts of Austria, such as, for instance, Galicia.

"Whether, in view of this feeling, it would be possible to move the Russian Government to take the attitude of a passive onlooker on the Austro-Serbian passage-of-arms, I have no means of judging. What, however, I believe I can say with certainty is, that there is no chance in case of war of influencing public opinion here against Serbia, even if there should be conjured up the bloody shadows of Draga and her lover, whose removal has long been forgotten by the public here, and hence belongs to those historical occurrences with which, so far as non-British countries are concerned, people here are in general much less acquainted than the average third-form schoolboy in Germany is.

"Now I am far from suggesting that we should throw over our alliance or our ally. I consider the league that has established itself in the sentimental life of both Empires to be necessary, and with regard to the many Germans living in Austria to be the natural form of their attachment to us. It is for

me only a question as to whether it is advisable for us to support our comrades in a policy, or rather to guarantee a policy which I look upon as a wild one, since it will lead neither to a radical solution of the problem nor to the crushing of the Great Serbian movement. If the Austrian police and the Bosnian provincial authorities let the Heir to the Throne drive through 'an avenue of bomb-throwers,' I can see in this no sufficient reason to risk the famous 'Pomeranian grenadier' in promoting the huzzar-policy of Austria, merely in order to strengthen Austria's self-consciousness, which in this case, as the era of Aehrenthal has shown, considers its supreme task to be its entire liberation from the leading-strings of Berlin.

"If, however, it is proposed to decide our policy by the consideration that as soon as the Great Serbian movement has received its death-blow, Austria Felix, relieved of this anxiety, will be grateful to us for the assistance we have rendered, I cannot suppress the question whether the national movement in Hungary was stamped out when the revolt was overthrown by the help of the Tsar Nicholas, and by the constant requisition of the gallows after the Hungarian subjugation at Világos under direction of the Imperial General Haynau, and whether the rescue of Austria by the Tsar really laid the foundation of cordiality and confidence between the two empires."

Thus Lichnowsky wrote on July 16th. Of course, all his Cassandra warnings had the usual result. They were absolutely unheeded.

Meanwhile Poincaré's departure to St. Petersburg

had taken place before the Note to Serbia was dispatched. As we have already seen, therefore, it was determined to delay handing it in till Poincaré had left St. Petersburg. With regard to this matter Tschirschky reported on July 14th :

" After Count Tisza had left me, Count Berchtold invited me to call on him in order to inform me, in his turn, as to the result of to-day's conference. To his great joy agreement on all sides had been attained as to the tenor of the Note to be presented to Serbia. Count Tisza received his (the Minister's) views in a gratifying manner, and had even increased the severity of some of the points. At all events, it was evidently impossible, owing to technical considerations, to present the Note in Belgrade before the 16th or the 18th.

" It had unanimously been held advisable in to-day's conference to await in any case the departure of M. Poincaré from St. Petersburg before steps were taken in Belgrade **[A pity!—W.]**; for, if possible, it was to be avoided that in St. Petersburg, in a whirl of champagne-sentiment, and under the influence of MM. Poincaré, Isvolsky and the Grand Dukes a fraternization should be celebrated, which would thereupon influence the attitude of the two Powers, and possibly consolidate it. It would be a good thing if the toasts could be got over before the Note was presented. Thus the presentation of the Note should take place on July 25th.

" Count Berchtold, as Count Tisza had done before him, urgently and repeatedly requested me not to leave my Government in any doubt that the fact

> of the presence of M. Poincaré in St. Petersburg was the sole reason for the delay in presenting the Note in Belgrade, and that they could rest completely assured in Berlin that there was no question of hesitation or irresolution here."

These continued assurances, that Berlin could rely on Vienna's determination to fight, are very remarkable.

In the Vienna Cabinet Council of July 19th Berchtold also declared that he was against any unnecessary postponement,

> "As they are now beginning in Berlin to get nervous, and news as to our intentions has filtered through to Rome, so that he could not answer for undesirable incidents if the matter were spun out any further. Conrad von Hötzendorf was urging the necessity of haste. The Minister of War declares that everything is ready for mobilization!"

Thus it was desired to present the Note as soon as possible, but not before the French President had left Russia. It is amusing to see with what care his travelling route is now studied, and one of the two conspirators communicates to the other his observations of the movements of the unsuspecting wanderer.

On July 17th it is reported from Vienna that the Note will be presented on July 23rd, as on that day Poincaré is to leave St. Petersburg. From now, however, the very hour of his departure became important.

On July 21st the Admiral's Staff of the Navy informs Jagow that the departure from Kronstadt is fixed for the 23rd at ten o'clock at night. On the same day Jagow

telegraphs to the Ambassador in St. Petersburg the question :

> " At what o'clock on Thursday is the departure of the President from Kronstadt arranged for ? "

On the 22nd Jagow telegraphed to Vienna :

> " Had inquired of Count Pourtalès as to the programme of Poincaré's visit. He says that the President leaves Kronstadt at eleven o'clock at night. By Central European time this would be nine-thirty. If steps are taken in Belgrade to-morrow afternoon at five, they would thus become known in St. Petersburg while Poincaré is still there."

To this Tschirschky replied on the 23rd :

> " Austrian Government thanks you for the information. Baron Giesl has been instructed to delay by one hour the presentation of the Note."

Thus it was that the Note was presented on the 23rd at six o'clock in the evening.

We see from all this the nature of the anxieties that troubled the Austrian and German Ministers on the verge of the outbreak of the World-War.

A FALSE CALCULATION

It had been intended to make swiftly a surprise attack, so as to confront Europe, before she was properly conscious of how things stood, with a *fait accompli*, to which its submission would be most speedily

obtained. In this way it was hoped, by a simultaneous surprise-attack and declaration of war, to preserve the world's peace.

This was a singular kind of peace-policy, and yet the German White Book of July, 1919, still dares to assert the peaceful intentions of the Imperial Government.

These peaceful intentions are supposed to be shown by the fact that the *possibility* of a war with *Russia* was considered, but the *probability* of a *general* war was not reckoned with.

The Government even hoped that Russia would again allow herself to be intimidated, as in former Balkan crises, when taken completely by surprise, faced by a *fait accompli*, and no hope of the other party giving way. For the rest, they trusted to luck.

On July 28th Baron Beyens reported from Berlin:

> "In Vienna, as in Berlin, despite the official assurances but recently exchanged between the Tsar and Poincaré concerning the complete equipment of the armies of the Dual Alliance, it was firmly believed that Russia was not in a position to wage a European war and would not dare to involve herself in so terrible an adventure. The disquieting internal situation, revolutionary machinations, inadequate equipment, poor transport facilities—all these grounds would compel Russia to look on impotently at the execution of Serbia. The same poor opinion was held, if not of the French Army, yet of the spirit prevailing in the Government circles of France. . . .
>
> "The opinion that Russia was not equal to a European war prevailed not only in the heart of

the Imperial Government but was also held by the German captains of industry specializing in armaments. The most competent among them, to adduce an example, Herr Krupp von Bohlen, assured a colleague of mine that the Russian artillery was far from being good and complete, whilst the German had never been better. 'It would be madness for Russia to declare war on Germany in these circumstances,' he added."

This communication of Beyens is confirmed by Szögyeny's report given above concerning his conversation with William on July 5th, which, in turn, is corroborated by what Tirpitz tells of July 6th in his "Reminiscences":

"According to the statements which he (Kaiser Wilhelm) made to my official representative on the morning of July 6th in the Park of the Neues Palais at Potsdam, the Kaiser considered an intervention of Russia for the protection of Serbia improbable, as the Tsar would not protect the regicides, and Russia at the time was unfit for war, both financially and in a military respect. Furthermore, the Kaiser assumed somewhat optimistically that France would put the brake on Russia, in view of the former's unfavourable financial position and lack of heavy artillery. Of England the Kaiser did not speak. Complications with that State were not thought of at all." (Page 209.)

The same opinions are expressed by Jagow in a letter to Lichnowsky on July 18th:

"The more determined Austria shows herself, the

more energetically we support her, Russia is all the more likely to keep quiet. In Petersburg, of course, there is sure to be a bit of a row, but fundamentally Russia is not ready to strike now. Nor will France and England desire war now. In a few years, according to all competent authorities, Russia will be ready to strike. Then she will crush us with her numbers; then she will have built her Baltic fleet and her strategical railways. Meanwhile, our group will be growing weaker and weaker. Russia knows this very well, and, therefore, absolutely desires peace for a few more years. I willingly believe your cousin Benckendorff, that Russia does not want a war with us now. Sasonow gives the same assurance. But the Government in Russia, which to-day is still a friend of peace and, to a certain extent, pro-German, becomes increasingly weaker and Slavonic feeling more and more anti-German. . . . I desire no preventive war. But when battle offers we must not run away."

So Jagow does not believe that Russia, at the moment, can and will wage war. He does not want to force a preventive war exactly, but if it does come, it will really be a piece of good fortune for the German Empire and its allies.

This was, in those days, a widespread opinion, not only in Austria, but also in Germany. Immediately after the outbreak of war, Herr Paul Rohrbach, a Pan-German magnate, and likely to be familiar with the German General Staff's line of thought, made this statement:

"For us—*i.e.*, for Germany and Austria-Hungary

—the chief anxiety was that by a temporary, apparent yielding on the part of Russia we might be morally compelled to wait until Russia and France were really ready."*

It is characteristic of the eagerness for war among these circles that when it actually broke out it was received, not with anxiety or with grief as a fearful catastrophe, but with jubilation as a deliverance.

On June 7th, 1915, the King of Bavaria stated:

> "Russia's declaration of war was followed by that of France, and when the English then fell upon us I said:
>
> "'I am glad, and I am glad for this reason, that now we can settle accounts with our enemies and that now, at last, we will obtain a direct outlet from the Rhine to the sea.'"

Such was the desire for peace of the reigning German princes on the outbreak of the war. But it is certain that all were not so stupid and wanton as to long for war. The arbitrators at the Foreign Office "risked" it, to be sure, but hoped that events would take the turn they did in 1909 and 1913, when Russia drew back owing to inadequate equipment. They did not consider that, this time, the Russian Empire was subjected to a particularly severe test: she was required to evacuate all her political strongholds in the Balkans and to hand them over entirely to Austria.

Meanwhile, by taking prompt action, leaving Russia no time to come to an understanding with her friends,

* "German Policy and the War," *Dresden, Verlag "Das grössere Deutschland"* (pp. 82, 83).

Russia might soonest be brought "peaceably" to her knees. Should she, however, offer unexpected resistance the best prospects of success, also in a military sense, were to be found in leaving the enemy as little time as possible to make preparations.

THE HOODWINKING OF EUROPE

In all circumstances public opinion had to be lulled to sleep until the moment had arrived. This was not so simple. Foreign countries were to be reassured, while, simultaneously, the home population was to be worked up into the mood for war, which was absolutely indispensable if their actions were not to be crippled from the outset. And, on the other hand, neither of the two allies seems to have really trusted the other. Each scented "slackness" in the other, unless energetically goaded by the Press.

This occasioned many an edifying statement.

Thus, on July 18th, Jagow telegraphed to Tschirschky:

> "To-morrow the *Norddeutsche* will publish some comments on the Austro-Serbian dispute, which are couched in intentionally mild terms in consideration of European diplomacy. This markedly semi-official organ must not sound a premature alarm. Please see that this is not falsely interpreted as German deviation from determination shown there."

Before this already, on July 15th, Berchtold sent the following message to Szögyeny in Berlin:

> "From this—to us also—undesirable delay it is

not difficult to explain the attitude of our semi-official Press.

"Momentarily, we must, on the one hand, prevent any weakening of public opinion, now favourable to our policy, in the Monarchy, and, on the other hand, we must not allow thoughts of mediation to spring up with other Powers owing to a language on the part of our Press by which the situation is systematically accentuated."

The regulation of the tone of the Press was followed by other "sedatives," the principal of which was the departure of the military chiefs. We have already seen that the Minister for War and the Chief of the General Staff were sent on leave to Austria for the express purpose of hoodwinking Europe.

To this William remarked that it was childish. This is not quite comprehensible, for he himself went on furlough, too, at that time.

Here we must return to the mysterious conferences held by Wilhelm before he started on his Scandinavian trip. These were held with the greatest secrecy possible, so as to prevent premature alarm. The rigorous secrecy is evidenced by the concluding sentence of the Bussche notes of August, 1917: "Thoroughly reliable source." It was, therefore, not a question of a fact generally known in Government circles, but of one known only to the trusted few.

Had the public learned anything of a war council, the cat would have been out of the bag immediately; then all the world would have known what had been hatched at these conferences. Just as, after the Kaiser's interview with Bethmann, the meeting with the military chiefs became unavoidably necessary in view of the

Kaiser's imminent departure on his trip to the North, so the anxious concealment of that meeting was not less necessary.

His trip to the North had been planned beforehand. Its postponement might have aroused suspicion. Now it became a means to lull Europe into security. How could any idea of the gravity of the situation arise when the German Emperor and his Fleet had gone on a cruise to the North!

On July 7th he started on his journey, from which he did not return until the 27th. While at sea he remained, of course, in constant touch with Berlin. These endeavours to hoodwink Europe produced some peculiar fruit. Thus, on July 11th, Count Wedel, one of the Kaiser's suite, telegraphed from Bergen:

> "On submitting the customary congratulatory telegram drafted by the Foreign Office for the King of Serbia's birthday to-morrow, His Majesty commanded me to inquire of your Excellency whether such a telegram appears necessary and harmless at the present moment."

To this Jagow replied:

> "As Vienna has not yet taken any steps whatever in Belgrade, the omission of the customary telegram would be too remarkable and might give rise to premature uneasiness. Recommend, therefore, its dispatch."

So upon the dear cousin, whom they had declared a bloodthirsty murderer, all the blessings of Heaven were hastily called down in the tenderest terms, before the dagger was plunged into his back.

However delightful this pleasure-cruise before the opening of the great slaughter might have been, it finally got on Wilhelm's nerves as the decision drew near. The Imperial Chancellor wanted to keep him away as long as possible, so that Europe might remain quiet and not get wind of what was afoot. William, however, began to fear that the burning fuse might cause a premature explosion, leaving him and his Fleet a prey to the English on the Norwegian coast or giving Russia a free hand in the Baltic. He urged that they should return.

On July 18th, Jagow asked Count Wedel for an exact statement of the *Hohenzollern's* course, adding :

> " As we wish to localize eventual conflict between Austria and Serbia, we must not alarm people by premature return of H.M. ; on the other hand, the All Highest must be within reach should unforeseen events necessitate important decisions (mobilization) for us also. Cruising in the Baltic might, perhaps, be contemplated for last days of trip."

On July 19th, William orders the Fleet to keep together until the 25th, so that it " may be able to carry out quickly the command to cut short the journey."

Bethmann, who at this critical juncture was at Hohenfinow instead of in Berlin (also to calm Europe's nerves ?), thereupon telegraphed to the Foreign Office on the 21st :

> " H.M.'s Order for the Fleet to keep together until 25th makes me fear that as soon as Ultimatum is rejected remarkable Fleet movements might be ordered from Balmholm (where the Kaiser then was). On the other hand, in the event of a crisis, wrong station of the Fleet might prove disastrous ! "

Bethmann, therefore, asked for the view of the Admiralty Staff. The latter answered on July 22nd, that in the event of England declaring war, "an attack upon our Fleet by the English Navy was to be counted upon with certainty."

Jagow sent a reassuring telegram to the Imperial Chancellor, stating that England was quite peaceable and was allowing her Fleet, which had been assembled for manœuvres, to disperse.

On the 23rd the Imperial Chancellor then telegraphed to Count Wedel, the Austrian Note would be delivered "this afternoon," the Ultimatum would expire on the 25th, and that, for the time being, Germany would say the whole affair did not concern her.

> "Only the intervention of other Powers would draw us into the conflict. It is not to be supposed that this will happen at once, or that England especially will immediately decide to intervene: the very fact that President Poincaré, leaving Kronstadt to-day, will visit Stockholm on the 25th, Copenhagen on the 27th and Christiania on the 29th, arriving at Dunkirk on the 31st, is likely to delay all decisions.
>
> "English Fleet, according to Admiralty Staff reports, is to disperse on the 27th, and repair to home ports. Any premature recall of our Fleet might cause general uneasiness, and be regarded as suspicious, especially in England."

But William has no confidence in the maintenance of peace. On the 25th he gives the order to the Fleet to hold itself in readiness for immediate return home. Bethmann conjures the Kaiser to wait still. This

causes an outburst of wrath on the part of the Kaiser. The Chancellor's telegram with William's additions runs :

"The Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy informs me that Your Majesty has, in view of a Wolff telegram **[Unheard of!—W.]**, given orders to the Fleet to prepare immediately for the homeward journey. **[Incredible imputation! Never entered my head!!! On my Ambassador's report of the mobilization in Belgrade! This may entail Russia's mobilization, will entail Austria's! In this case I must have my forces on land and sea together. In the Baltic there is not a single ship!! Moreover, it is my custom to take military measures, not according to a Wolff telegram, but according to the general situation, and this the *civilian* Chancellor** (Civilian underlined by the Kaiser.—K.) **has not yet grasped.—W.]**

"Meanwhile, Admiral von Pohl will probably have submitted to Your Majesty the reports of Your Majesty's naval attaché in London, and of the confidential agent of the Navy in Portsmouth, according to which the English Navy is taking no noticeable measures whatever **[Doesn't need to! It is already prepared for war, as the Review has just shown, and has mobilized!—W.]**, but is carrying out, according to plan, the dispersal previously arranged.

"As the reports hitherto received from Your Majesty's Ambassador in London also show that Sir E. Grey, for the present at least, is not contemplating a direct participation of England in a possible European War, and will use his influence

for the localization, as far as feasible, of the Austro-Hungarian-Serbian conflict, I venture most humbly to recommend that Your Majesty does not order a premature return of the Fleet for the time being." **[When Russia mobilizes my Fleet must be already in the Baltic, so it is going home.—W.]**

On July 26th, Bethmann once more besought his Imperial master "to remain in Norway for the present, as this would materially facilitate England's proposed intermediary action in Petersburg, which is now visibly vacillating." To which William remarks:

> **"From what is that (Petersburg's vacillation) to be inferred? Not from the material submitted to me."**

And even before this, in reply to the desire that he should remain in Norway, he said:

> "There is a Russian Fleet! In the Baltic there are now five Russian torpedo-boat flotillas making instructional cruises, all or part of which could be stationed before the Belts in sixteen hours, blocking the way. Port Arthur should be a lesson! My Fleet has marching orders for Kiel, and thither it goes!"

One sees William reckoned with the immediate outbreak of the world-war after the delivery of the Ultimatum to Serbia. He therefore steamed home at full speed, in spite of Bethmann-Hollweg. He begins his active intervention in the war policy by snubbing his own Chancellor, "most humbly daring to recommend," as if he were a bootblack, addressing him as a creature who has not yet grasped the general situation. Military superiority thinks it is treating the Chancellor with

especial contempt when it addresses him as a "*Civilian* Chancellor," who has not the slightest influence upon military measures.

On the other hand, the telegram bears witness not only to the submissiveness of Bethmann, who behaves less like a civilian *Chancellor* than a civilian *serf*, but also to the shortsightedness and mustiness of his policy, which imagined it could deceive the English, for a few days at least, as to the dangerous character of the Austrian Ultimatum by leaving the Kaiser longer on the Norwegian coast.

Moreover, his calculations based on Poincaré's journey also proved to be mistaken. He had hoped it would delay all decisions on the part of the Entente, and leave Austria a free hand in respect of Serbia beyond July 31st. But Poincaré was in just as great a hurry to get home as William, and, in view of the threatening situation, rightly so. He cancelled his visits and arrived in France on July 29th.

Simultaneously, Austria had been pursuing no less zealously the policy of hoodwinking Europe. The Austrian diplomats, however, treated the matter more bluntly. Since the disclosure of their forgery tricks against Serbia, their reputation for truth was quoted almost as low as the Austrian krone is to-day. They did all honour to this reputation by making the most reassuring asseverations concerning their conciliatory intentions immediately before the delivery of their Ultimatum, which was purposely couched in such brutal terms as to appear unacceptable.

Dumaine, the French Ambassador in Vienna, reported on July 26th :

"Herr Schebeko (Russian Ambassador in Vienna)

> has suddenly returned from a journey to Russia. He had started on this journey only after Count Berchtold had given the assurance that the demands addressed to Serbia were highly acceptable."

On July 23rd the acting Foreign Minister in Paris, M. Bienvenu Martin, reported to the French Ambassador :

> "M. Dumaine, whom I had charged to direct the attention of the Austrian Government to the uneasiness that has arisen in Europe, was assured by Baron von Macchio, in reply to his question, that the tone of the Austrian Note and the terms laid down therein *were calculated to effect a peaceful solution*. I do not know how far credence may be given to these assurances, *considering the usages of the Imperial Chancellery*."

The usages of diplomacy are in no country distinguished by excessive sincerity. But a perfidy so short-sighted as to assert to-day something whose utter falsehood it must itself reveal to-morrow, implies not only such shamelessness but also such stupidity as—Oxenstierna notwithstanding—is out of the common.

After such preparation of public opinion the ultimatum was delivered to Serbia on the evening of July 23rd.

CHAPTER XII

THE ULTIMATUM TO SERBIA

THE DELIVERY OF THE NOTE

ON July 23rd the Austrian Note was delivered in Belgrade. It was, in reality, an Ultimatum requiring the unconditional acceptance of Austria's demands within forty-eight hours. The Austrian Minister in Belgrade, Baron von Giesl, had accordingly characterized the Note as an "Ultimatum" in a telegram to Belgrade, whereupon he was informed it was only a "time-limited *démarche*," as its rejection was not to be answered by an immediate declaration of war, but at first only by the breaking off of diplomatic relations. With such petty splitting of hairs the State wiseacres of the Ballplatz hoped to keep up in Europe for a few days longer the appearance of their peaceful intentions.

On July 24th the Note was to be handed to the Powers, on the 25th Serbia had to reply. This indecent haste, after such long hesitation, was purposely demanded, so as to make it impossible for Serbia to confer with the Powers, or for the Powers to confer with one another, and in order to preclude all intervention.

Germany at once made haste to assure all the world, and also her own representatives abroad, that she had no knowledge of the Note, and had not influenced it in

the slightest, and that it was as great a surprise to her as to the other Powers.

Thus Jagow telegraphed to the German Minister in Stockholm on July 23rd, 2 p.m.:

> "According to all appearances, Austria-Hungary, who feels her existence threatened by the Greater Serbia agitation, has made very serious demands in Belgrade. These are not known to us; we regard them as Austria-Hungary's internal affair, in which we have no right to interfere."

On July 24th Zimmermann telegraphed to the Ambassadors in Paris, London and Petrograd:

> "In local diplomatic circles opinion prevails that we instigated Austria-Hungary to send sharp Note to Serbia, and also helped to frame it. Rumour appears to emanate from Cambon. If necessary, please counter him there. We exercised no influence whatsoever on the contents of the Note, and had just as little opportunity as other Powers of taking up any attitude in regard to it before publication."

In these edifying instructions only one statement is correct: that Cambon from the very outset did, indeed, smell a rat.

On July 24th he reported on an interview with Jagow:

> "I asked him whether the Berlin Cabinet had really known nothing whatever of the Austrian demands before they were transmitted to Belgrade. When he affirmed this statement, I told

him I was greatly surprised to see him take up the cudgels so zealously on behalf of claims of whose extent and range he was unaware.

"'Mind,' interrupted Herr von Jagow, 'it is only because we are talking personally with each other that I allow you to say that to me.'" (French Yellow Book of 1914, No. 30.)

The same assurance was received from the virtuously indignant Jagow by the British Chargé d'Affaires, Sir H. Rumboldt, who reported thereon to London on July 25th :

"The State Secretary repeated very earnestly, that although he had been accused of having known the entire contents of the Note, he, as a matter of fact, had not had this knowledge." (Blue Book, 1914, No. 18.)

Cambon reported on this conversation on the same day :

"The British Chargé d'Affaires also inquired of Herr von Jagow, as I did yesterday, whether Germany had had no knowledge of the Austrian Note before it was dispatched, and received such an unequivocal denial that he could not pursue the subject. But he could not refrain from expressing his surprise at the complete *carte blanche* that Germany had given Austria." (Yellow Book, No. 41.)

Sir Horace Rumboldt, who received these assurances, was the same whose statements concerning "Germany's

habitual mendacity" are quoted in the White Book of June, 1919, as we have already seen. Perhaps it was at the end of July, 1914, that he first came to this conclusion.

When the Berlin Foreign Office declared it "had exercised no influence whatever on the contents of the Austrian Note, and had had just as little opportunity as other Powers to take up any attitude in regard to it before publication"—*i.e.*, before July 24th—it is clear from what has hitherto been communicated that it was uttering a conscious untruth. The German Government had known exactly that the Note would be framed in such a manner that no State that valued its self-determination would be able to accept it. The German Government was not only aware of this intention of Austria, but approved and encouraged it.

Afterwards, indeed, the Foreign Office expressed itself more cautiously concerning its knowledge of the Note. It denied only the knowledge of its *wording*. It had cognizance of this, it declared, no sooner than the other Powers—*i.e.*, only after the Note had already been delivered in Belgrade.

Not even this excuse holds water.

Already on July 21st Tschirschky received a copy of the Note. He did not telegraph it to Berlin, perhaps so that the secret of the code-key might not be jeopardized.

He transmitted the Note by letter. It reached the Foreign Office, therefore, only on the afternoon of July 22nd. The other Powers, however, did not receive the Note until the 24th; so even if we take into account, not the contents of the Note, but only its final wording, it is false to say that the Note was not known to Germany sooner than to the other Great Powers.

Dr. Gooss must acknowledge this awkward fact; he tries to extricate himself, or rather the Bethmann Government, by declaring that the text of the Note had been able to reach the Foreign Office in Berlin

> "Only at a time in which any influencing of the Vienna Cabinet by means of detailed conferences and propositions was no longer possible."

In his book on the outbreak of the world-war, Herr von Jagow states that Count Szögyeny came to him on July 22nd, between 7 and 8 p.m., bringing the Ultimatum.

> "After Count Szögyeny's visit, a notification of the Ultimatum from our Ambassador in Vienna, which had meanwhile arrived, was then handed to me." (Page 110.)

This delay is surely remarkable. The Ultimatum took over twenty-four hours to come from Vienna to Berlin! But even then there was time enough to prevent its delivery in Belgrade, if they had wanted to do so. Jagow asserts he at once said the Note was "amply sharp and overshot the mark." The Imperial Chancellor was, he declares, of the same opinion.

> "Count Szögyeny replied that couldn't be helped now, as the Ultimatum had already been sent to Belgrade, and was to be delivered next morning."

And thereby Imperial Chancellor and State Secretary were reassured.

In a footnote after the statements in the text of his book Jagow casually remarks :

> "Unless there had been indecision in Vienna as to the moment of delivery, the Ambassador must have been mistaken in this respect, for actually the Ultimatum was not delivered until 6 p.m."

This is tantamount to saying that Jagow was deceived by Szögyeny as to the time of the delivery of the Ultimatum ! He would certainly have protested against the delivery had he known that it would take place only at 6 p.m. and not in the morning.

But did he not know this ? We have just seen (page 64) how eagerly Jagow endeavoured to find out at what hour of the evening of the 23rd Poincaré was leaving Petrograd. And on the evening of the 22nd the Secretary of State telegraphed to Vienna a statement about this departure, which resulted in the postponement of the delivery from 5 to 6 p.m. And now he wants to make us believe he knew nothing at all about it, and thought the Note to Serbia was being delivered in the morning !

On August 11th, 1917, State Secretary Zimmermann wrote to the Under-Secretary of State, von der Bussche :

> "DEAR BUSSCHE,
>
> "Objectively speaking, the statement of the *Evening News* was correct, inasmuch as we did receive the Serbian Ultimatum some twelve hours before delivery. On the other hand, I certainly do not recollect having blurted out this fact to an American diplomat. A *démenti* may, therefore, be made. Whether, however, this appears expedient,

in view of the fact of our knowledge, which, after all, cannot be concealed eternally, I leave an open question. Kindest regards,

"Yours,

"ZIMMERMANN."

But why this eagerness to deny all knowledge of the Note, whose contents and wording was afterwards defended with all energy?

An underhand game was purposely being played, each being assigned his part. On July 20th the Note reached the Austrian Ambassadors, with injunctions to deliver it on July 24th to the Governments to which they were accredited.

Count Szögyeny thereupon took the liberty of remarking that an exception should be made in the case of Germany. To which Berchtold replied on July 22nd:

> "The order in question had merely a formal significance in regard to Germany. The official delivery of our Note was to take place in Berlin with the same formalities as in the case of the other signatory Powers. The Note mentioned was communicated to Herr von Tschirschky already yesterday in strict confidence. At all events, it has already been transmitted to Berlin by the Ambassador."

Thus, in respect of the Note also Europe was to be deceived by deliberate lying.

THE LOCALIZATION OF THE WAR

The German Government had very good reasons for not letting it transpire that it had known of the Austrian Ultimatum, or, indeed, that it was conspiring with Austria.

It had, as we have seen, given its blessing to the war against Serbia on July 5th. It was also prepared to "risk" the war against Russia and France—but wanted no more than that. It counted upon Italy's co-operation and England's neutrality. To be able to enter the war, it needed also the enthusiasm of its own people. Now it knew perfectly well that the great majority of this people was peace-loving to the highest degree, and that the sharpest opposition would spring up when it learned that the Austrian *démarche* against Serbia was not only known by the Kaiser and his Ministers, but also approved and encouraged. This would most seriously have jeopardized the whole scheme from the outset.

Immediately after the publication of the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia, the Committee of the German Social Democracy issued an appeal (July 25th), which ran:

> "The dogs of war let loose by Austrian Imperialism are preparing to bring death and destruction upon all Europe. Although we condemn the doings of the Great Serbian Nationalists, the wanton war provocation of the Austro-Hungarian Government calls for the sharpest protest. Such brutal demands have never yet in the history

> of the world been made of an independent State, and can only be calculated positively to provoke war.
>
> "The class-proud proletariat of Germany, in the name of humanity and culture, raises a flaming protest against the criminal doings of the war agitators. It imperatively demands of the German Government that it use its influence with the Austrian Government to maintain peace."

Had the German proletariat had an inkling of the real position of things, had it known that the "criminal doings of the war agitators" was a pre-arranged affair between Vienna and Berlin, it would not have been so naïve as to call upon the German Government to influence the Austrian in the sense of peace, but would have attacked the German Government just as unanimously as the Austrian, and great masses of the non-proletarian working classes would also have joined it. With such a feeling, the German Government could not possibly have launched a great war. The German Social Democracy could have saved the peace of the world. Its prestige, and with it that of the German people, would have been infinitely enhanced by the defeat it prepared for the German Government.

To avoid this there was only one means: the cognizance and complicity of the German Government had to be carefully concealed.

This was no less necessary were Italy's help and England's neutrality to be won.

Both immediately turned against Austria, as, indeed, did all the world. It was now up to Germany to play the part of the surprised, peaceable neighbour, whom loyalty to her alliance summoned to the side of the

friendly Power, whose extremity the iniquitous outrage of Serajevo had revealed, but a neighbour who was ready to mediate and to maintain peace. Should she thus come into conflict with the insatiable Russia—oh, well, everybody knows the best-intentioned person cannot live in peace if it doesn't please the wicked neighbour.

It was only unfortunate that Germany insisted upon saving the peace in a peculiar way: viz., by demanding the *localization* of the point at issue. Could anything have been more reasonable? One had to strive to keep the conflict within local limits and to prevent it assuming larger dimensions.

The report of the Bavarian Legation in Berlin, published by Eisner, of July 18th, runs:

> "With a view to the localization of the war, the Imperial administration will, immediately after the delivery of the Austrian Note in Belgrade, initiate a diplomatic action with the Great Powers.
>
> "Pointing out that the Kaiser is cruising in the North, while the Chief of the Great General Staff and the Prussian Minister for War are on furlough, it will allege that Germany was just as much taken by surprise by Austria's *démarche* as were the other Powers. (Its aim will be to bring the Powers to the view that the settlement of accounts between Austria and Serbia is the peculiar affair of these two States.)"

The passages in brackets are missing in Eisner's publication. They belong to those by the omission of which Eisner is said to have distorted the meaning of the report in a way unfavourable to Germany. This

can only be said by someone who imagines that the efforts to localize the war had been a serious peace scheme. In reality, it meant the derangement and sabotage of every scheme for peace. The assertion that Serbia's overthrow by Austria concerned these two States alone implied nothing less than that in future Austria alone had any say in the Balkans; implied that Russia was required to consent voluntarily to her elimination there, to declare herself beaten before she had fired a shot. By this striving after localization of the conflict, Russia was faced with the alternative: either to submit or to declare war on Austria.

The demand for localization was, therefore, just the very way to force Russia to war.

The alternative to the localization of the conflict was its solution through the intervention of Europe, *i.e.*, either through a Court of Arbitration or through the mediation of the Great Powers not directly concerned. Only this Europeanizing of the problem afforded the prospect of the local war not becoming a European war. But, of course, it did not afford Austria the prospect of being left a free hand in the military crushing of Serbia. And so the highly dangerous method of localization had to be insisted upon with all obduracy. It signified now, as in the annexation crisis of 1909, a speculation on Russia's weakness and on the peaceableness of England and of France. The Bavarian report, indeed, continues:

> "Herr Zimmermann assumes that both England and France, to whom a war would hardly be desirable at present, will influence Russia in a peaceable sense; in addition, he is building on the fact that bluff is one of the most popular desiderata of the

> Russian policy, and that the Russian, although fond of brandishing his sword, is not, at the decisive moment, fond of drawing it for others."

If, however, things turned out differently, the demand for the "localization" of the war still afforded great advantages. It could only fail through Russia's claims, so that one stood before the world, or at least before one's own people, as the Power that had wanted peace—and hereby had encountered Russia's resistance. Now it was attempted to denounce this Power as the disturber of the peace.

The demand for the localization of the war was another factor that required the strictest concealment of the understanding between Germany and Austria. For it is clear that Germany could not declare that the whole conflict concerned only Austria and Serbia, to the exclusion of every other Power, when she herself had co-operated most energetically in the preparation of this conflict.

We see that both Germany and Austria had every reason to hide from the world their co-operation, from the Potsdam decisions on July 5th down to the delivery of the Ultimatum in Belgrade on July 23rd.

THE SABOTAGE OF THE PEACE EFFORTS

It was not easy to appear seriously concerned about the peace and, at the same time, to secure Austria "her" war with Serbia, as also to "localize" it—*i.e.*, to place before Russia the alternative, either to declare war on Austria or to submit to her without a struggle.

The chief thing to be done was not to allow the

Powers to come to reason and to an understanding, but continually to create new, accomplished facts before an intervention could gain ground.

On the evening of July 23rd the Austrian Minister delivered his Government's Note in Belgrade. Not till the following day was it transmitted to the Governments of France, England, Italy and Russia. And on the 25th Serbia's answer was demanded! Paschitsch, nevertheless, gave this answer at the desired time. It was a detailed document that, contrary to expectations, consented in the main to all the Austrian Government's demands, in spite of their unheard-of severity.

And Austria? It was officially reported from Vienna:

> "The Premier, M. Paschitsch, appeared at the Austrian Legation in Belgrade a few minutes before *six*, and gave an inadequate answer to the Austro-Hungarian Note. Baron Giesl thereupon notified him of the breaking off of diplomatic relations, and left Belgrade with the Legation staff at 6.30 *p.m.*"

So a whole thirty minutes after delivery of the Note the Austrian Legation was already on the way to Vienna. Baron Giesl had announced the rupture of diplomatic relations even before he could have properly *read* the Serbian answer, to say nothing of examining it.

While Vienna seized upon this speed to bring about the longed-for war with Serbia before Europe had grasped what was afoot, Berlin displayed not the slightest haste to enlighten Europe as to her views on these events.

On July 27th, Herr von Jagow had the nerve to tell the French Ambassador in Berlin that *he had not yet found time* to read the Serbian answer.

It was not easy for the Great Powers to feel their way, in view of this procedure. But, however little time they had to come to an understanding among themselves, one thing was immediately clear: the world-peace was threatened in the extreme if it came to a war between Austria and Serbia. As much as Austria urged on this war (and Germany along with her, which, of course, nobody knew at the time), just as much did Russia, France and England try to prevent it. Not because their rulers were unmitigated angels of peace but because Russia and France were inadequately equipped for war. And England, too, was hampered by her Irish affairs. So far, therefore, the Central Powers had been right in their calculations. Hence the Powers unanimously agreed to seek to obtain from Austria an extension of the time-limit fixed for the answer on the one hand, and, on the other, to advise Serbia to yield. France, as well as Italy and England—nay, even Russia herself—exerted themselves in this direction as far as it was possible with the shortness of the time.

With Germany's tacit co-operation, Austria refused any extension of time. Serbia's answer, however, as already mentioned, turned out to be extremely accommodating. Nevertheless, on the 25th Austria broke off diplomatic relations, began immediately to mobilize, and declared war on July 28th. On the 29th she bombarded Belgrade. Each of these steps was a fresh provocation, each added something to the general excitement, and raised fresh obstacles to every peaceful solution. Nevertheless, Austria unwaveringly pursued the path she had taken, and was therein supported by

Germany, who, at the same time, was overflowing with protestations of peace.

Austria rejected all mediation proposals that were made, none of which emanated from Germany. The latter was satisfied with simply transmitting the proposals of others, or else refusing them at the very outset as incompatible with Austria's independence. Even the most urgent questioning could not lure a proposal from her, whilst England and Russia vied with each other in trying to find a way out of the muddle.

Prince Lichnowsky has described the situation very well :

> " It had, of course, needed but a hint from Berlin to induce Count Berchtold to be satisfied with a diplomatic success, and to be reassured with the Serbian reply. But this hint was not given. On the contrary, the war was urged on. It would have been too fine an achievement ! . . .
>
> " The impression is becoming more and more firmly established that we wanted the war in any circumstances. No other interpretation could be placed upon our attitude in a question that did not concern us directly at all. The earnest pleadings and definite declarations of M. Sasonow, later on the positively humble telegrams of the Tsar, Sir Edward Grey's repeated proposals, the warnings of the Marquis San Giuliano and Signor Bollati, my urgent advice—all were useless ; Berlin stuck to her resolution : Serbia must be massacred." (Pages 29, 30.)

The Tsar's telegrams may, indeed, be called " humble." He virtually implored that he should be

spared the dreadful alternative between war or unconditional submission, both of which he equally feared, because either threatened him with catastrophe, with ruin.

But did not precisely these humble telegrams permit one to expect that Russia would again, as in 1909, be forced to her knees, and this time still more thoroughly, if one only remained firm?

Thus everything appeared to be going on swimmingly for the Central Powers.

William, in those days, still appeared aggressive and in high spirits.

What he thought of the Austrian Note before he had read the Serbian reply is shown by his comments on a telegram from Belgrade of July 24th, read by him on the 25th. It announces:

> "The energetic tone and the precise demands of the Austrian Note have taken the Serbian Government completely by surprise." [William: **"Bravo! We had not thought the Viennese were still capable of that."]**

The telegram continues:

> "Since early morning the Ministerial Council has been sitting under the presidency of the Crown Prince-Regent."

William:

> "His Majesty [King Nicholas] seems to have made himself scarce!"

His exalted German Majesty did not dream how one

day many a " Majesty " would " make himself scarce " in a very different fashion !

Telegram :

> " The Ministerial Council is, however, unable to come to a decision."

William :

> " The haughty Slavs ! "

At the conclusion of the telegram he observes :

> " How hollow appears the whole of this so-called Great-Serbian State business ! Thus it is with all Slavonic States. Just stamp on the rabble ! "

Such was the language of the Peace Kaiser immediately before the outbreak of the war.

Far from being unfavourably impressed by the brusqueness of Austria, he condemned even the outward appearance of a conciliatory spirit, even a gesture of politeness, on the part of his ally.

On July 24th Tschirschky telegraphed from Vienna :

> " To show Russia his disposition to be reasonable, Count Berchtold sent this morning for the Russian Chargé d'Affaires."

To which William remarked on July 26th :

> " Quite unnecessary ! Looks weak and apologetic ; which is quite the wrong impression to give to Russia, and must be avoided. Austria is on firm

ground; she has taken her measures, and these cannot now, as it were, be made a subject for discussion."

Tschirschky further quotes Berchtold:

"Austria will make no claims on Serbian territory."

This prompts William to exclaim:

"Donkey! She must take the Sandjak, or the Serbians will get to the Adriatic."

Berchtold:

"Austria desires no displacement of the balance of power in the Balkans."

William:

"But that must and will come of itself. Austria must have the preponderance of power in the Balkans, in regard to the other smaller nations, and she must have it at Russia's expense, or there will be no peace."

At the close of the report he adds the comment:

"Weak."

He chafed under the necessity of restraining himself, at least outwardly—as required by the rôle assigned to Germany.

On July 26th, as William was preparing to set foot again on German soil, Bethmann telegraphed to him :

> " Should Russia prepare for conflict with Austria, England means to attempt mediation, and hopes to do so with French support. So long as Russia attempts no hostile act, I believe that we must keep quiet and aim at localization of the conflict. General von Moltke returned from Carlsbad to-day, and shares this view."

After the word " localization " William makes an exclamation-mark, and on the expression about keeping quiet he observes sarcastically :

> " Quiet is the first duty of a citizen ! Keep quiet—only keep quiet ! But a quiet mobilization is indeed something new ! "

When it really came to mobilization, William's sarcasm vanished.

Quite in keeping with all this is a telegram which Count Szögyeny sent from Berlin to Vienna on July 25th. It runs :

> " It is generally assumed here that in the event of a negative reply from Serbia, our declaration of war, combined with belligerent operations, will immediately follow. Any delay in the beginning of military operations is regarded here as very dangerous, in view of the intervention of other Powers. We are urgently advised to take action at once, and to confront the world with a *fait accompli*."

Surely this meant the most urgent pressure to strike with all speed.

In their statements concerning the origin of the war (White Book, June, 1919), Professors Hans Delbrück, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Max Weber, with Count Montgelas, give to this telegram a far more innocent interpretation. They say:

> "The telegram of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Count Szögyeny, of July 25th, 1914, urging the prompt beginning of military operations in the event of a declaration of war, is in accordance with the view already discussed that a localized and therefore also a speedy settlement of this dispute is the best measure to avert the spread of the conflagration." (Page 39.)

The telegram demands in plain terms immediate declaration of war, combined with military operations. The commentary of the four gentlemen transforms this unobtrusively into a demand for belligerent operations *in the event of a declaration of war!* And the demand that the world should be confronted with a *fait accompli* becomes a desire for "a speedy settlement of the dispute."

Such an interpretation of the telegram requires an incredible amount of goodwill, and outside Germany this will be hard to find. By this very free interpretation, Count Szögyeny's telegram of July 25th was sought to be deprived of its inconvenient contents. But this expedient wholly fails to work in the case of another telegram of the same diplomat, dated July 27th.

Both telegrams came into the hands of the "Commission of the Allied and Associated Governments

(formed in January, 1919) for fixing the responsibility of the originators of the war and the penalties to be imposed," and were published in its Report, which gives a sketch of the origin of the war as brief as it is, in the main, correct.

On this Report the German Government had two courses before it. It could either have kept silence, or it could have replied with the publication of the documents of the Foreign Office concerning the responsibility for the war. It did neither, but commissioned the four gentlemen named above to reply to the Report of the Commission with a criticism, as "independent Germans." We have just had in their treatment of Szögyeny's telegram a glimpse of their methods of work. Perhaps it would have been more to the purpose had "German Independents," instead of "independent Germans," been entrusted with this task.

The second telegram of July 27th received no better treatment. It is addressed by Szögyeny to Berchtold, and runs as follows:

> "State Secretary declared to me explicitly in strict confidence that England's proposals for mediation would very shortly be brought to the cognizance of Your Excellency by the German Government.
>
> "The German Government most explicitly states that it in no way identifies itself with these proposals, is even decidedly against their consideration, and transmits them only in deference to the request of England."

This telegram is surely a very serious matter. It behoved the four "independent Germans" to examine, above all, whether it was in unison with the policy

pursued by Germany up to the 27th. It recalls Jagow's telegram of July 18th, in which he stated that the mild language of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was only intended to mislead "European diplomacy," and must not influence Berchtold. The four historians preferred to adopt a different sort of procedure. They say:

> "The Commission has applied both to the former Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, and to the State Secretary, von Jagow, and has obtained from both the identical information that the dispatch [of Szögyeny, of July 27th] could not possibly be correct. We consider the statements of these two men to be worthy of credence."

But we may ask whether this assurance given by the accused alone is sufficient to inspire the rest of humanity with the same confidence in their innocence. The trustworthiness of these two persons is precisely what is called in question by the evidence of a man by no means hostile to them, who had every interest in stating the truth, and who immediately after the interview with Jagow wrote down his statements in the most definite form. And he wrote them repeatedly. The passage quoted above stands at the beginning of Szögyeny's dispatch. It ends as follows:

> "In conclusion, State Secretary reiterated his attitude, and begged me, so as to prevent any misunderstanding, to assure Your Excellency that should he, as above contemplated, step forward in the character of mediator, he was absolutely not in favour of a consideration of the wishes of England."

Definite testimony of this kind cannot be summarily disposed of on the vague statement of the accused, that "it could not possibly be correct.'

But help comes to the Rescue Commission. At the right moment Dr. Gooss throws it a plank to cling to, and through it the Commission feels justified in declaring that Szögyeny's most definite testimony is untrustworthy, because he—"had aged beyond his years!" (Page 39.)

It is not precisely in this way that the old régime can rehabilitate its honour. Consider the situation at this period. The German and Austrian Governments were preparing a war which might turn out a matter of life and death for these States. It was essential that the posts of cardinal importance should be filled by men of the highest powers. It was imperative that the two Allied Governments should perfectly understand each other, and that each should be accurately informed of the other's intentions. The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin formed the connecting link between the two States. On his sagacity, clear-headedness and accuracy depended the lives of nations and of governments. Thus there are only two possibilities before us. Was Count Szögyeny really the senile dullard that the white-washers of William and his understrappers now make him out? In this case the Austrian Government acted in an incredibly wanton and reckless manner in leaving a dull-witted driveller in this highly important post, while the German Government showed itself no less wanton and reckless in entrusting, at such a crisis, the most difficult and important functions to an idiot who did not know what people were telling him. A more serious indictment against both Governments is not conceivable. The exculpation is in this case worse than

the offence, for it is better for any nation to be directed by sagacious and well-informed rogues than by honest imbeciles. The former, at any rate, will not lead the country into situations that imperil not only the whole State but its leaders too. Only a blockhead would do that. The worst case of all is, of course, where dishonesty, frivolity and stupidity are united. The first alternative, therefore, the senility of Szögyeny, if a fact, does not exculpate the German Government; it merely transfers the guilt to another field of its operations.

Was it a fact? In 1914 Szögyeny was undoubtedly an old man, seventy-three years of age, into whose dispatches an error might occasionally creep. Much of what he states has been proved to be entirely correct. In the present instance, as we have already seen, his evidence is remarkably definite. It surely, therefore, calls for examination.

And on closer examination we discover that very important points of his report are confirmed by the German documents.

We find, too, that the motives attributed to Jagow, on which he based his questionable utterance of the 27th July, correspond accurately with the direction of the German Government's thoughts at that period.

Szögyeny reproduces their words:

> "The German Government considered it of the greatest importance that at the present moment England should not make common cause with Russia and France. Everything must therefore be avoided that might snap the wire hitherto functioning so well between Germany and England. Were Germany to tell Sir Edward Grey plainly that she declined to transmit his wishes to Austria-

> Hungary, which England believes will pay more consideration to Germany's mediation, then the above-mentioned situation, which we must absolutely avoid, would arise."

One sees that the Count was certainly not a brilliant stylist. But as regards the matter of the communication, Bethmann-Hollweg expressed himself on the same day to just the same substantial effect, although not from precisely the same standpoint. In a telegram to Tschirschky he announces Grey's proposals, and continues :

> " Having already rejected England's proposal for a conference, we cannot possibly turn down *à limine* this English suggestion too. If we reject every mediatory movement, the whole world will hold us responsible for the conflagration, and we shall be represented as the true instigators of the war. This would also have the effect of making impossible our position in the country, where we must appear in the light of having the war forced on us. Our position is all the more difficult as Serbia has apparently yielded to so great an extent. We cannot, therefore, refuse the rôle of mediator, and must submit the English proposal to the consideration of the Vienna Cabinet, more especially as London and Paris continue to make their influence felt in Petersburg. Will you obtain Count Berchtold's views on the English suggestion and also on Herr Sasonow's desire to negotiate direct with Vienna."

This strange mediator saw in the yielding of the Serbs one of the difficulties of the situation—a difficulty

only if one was bent on war and at the same time wished to pose as the party attacked. Nor does he recommend the English proposal, he merely transmits it, and apologizes for the fact that circumstances oblige him to do so.

To London, however, he telegraphs :

> "We have at once undertaken mediation-movement in Vienna in the sense desired by Sir Edward Grey."

The result of the "mediation-movement" was that Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28th.

England, nevertheless, made another effort to save the peace of the world. On the 29th Lichnowsky reported in a telegram which we shall deal with in detail in another connection :

> "Sir E. Grey repeated his suggestion already reported that we should take part in a mediation *à quatre, such as we had already accepted in principle.* Should, however, Your Excellency undertake the mediation, *of which I was able to show a prospect early this morning,* he would be equally well-pleased."

The two sentences printed in italics are missing in the copy of the telegram prepared for William. Can that have been accidental ? It permits the assumption that it was desired to conceal from the Kaiser that this kind of mediation "had been accepted in principle." This would be quite in keeping with Jagow's policy, concerning which Szögyeny reported.

Whatever may have been the state of the case in regard to this report, at all events German policy in the

first days after the delivery of the Ultimatum aroused even among neutrals a justified and growing mistrust in its honesty and love of peace.

But on the 28th July we see in preparation a change in its determined sabotage of every effort for peace.

THE BEGINNING OF UNCERTAINTY IN GERMANY

We have already learned that the German Government did, indeed, desire war with Serbia, and did not shrink from war with Russia and eventually with France; but at the same time it urgently needed to have its own people behind it, Italy by its side, and England not against it.

This was made uncommonly difficult by the clumsiness and obstinacy of Austria on the one hand, and by the sagacity of Serbia on the other.

When William read the reply given by Serbia to the Austrian Ultimatum of the 25th, he had to confess that thereby his cause was put very much in the wrong. At this he was visibly displeased.

He read the reply of the Serbian Government on July 28th, and added the comment:

> "A brilliant achievement for a time-limit of only forty-eight hours! This is more than one could have expected. A great moral success for Vienna, but it removes every ground for war, and Giesl might have stayed quietly in Belgrade. On this score *I* should never have advised mobilization."

Nevertheless, this did not prevent him from declaring in his speech from the Throne on August 4th:

> "My exalted Ally, the Emperor and King Francis Joseph, *was compelled to take up arms*."

Very different was the view expressed—and that not in a casual observation—on July 28th. On that day William wrote a letter to Bethmann-Hollweg, already printed in the *Deutsche Politik* of July 18th, 1919. On account of its importance we reproduce it here. The two very noteworthy phrases printed by us in parentheses are omitted in the text as given by the *Deutsche Politik*.

The letter runs:

> "Your Excellency,
>
> "After reading the Serbian reply, which I received this morning, I am convinced that the desires of the Danube Monarchy are substantially fulfilled. The few reservations which Serbia has made on particular points can, in my judgment, be cleared up by negotiation. But her capitulation (one of the most submissive kind) is here proclaimed to all the world, and with it every reason for war falls to the ground.
>
> "All the same, we can only attach a limited value to this scrap of paper and its contents so long as it is not translated into action. The Serbs are Orientals, and therefore sly, false, and masters of evasion. In order that these fine undertakings may be realized in truth and fact, it will be necessary to exercise a *douce violence*. This could be managed by Austria taking a pledge (Belgrade) for the compulsion and execution of the undertakings, and retaining it until the demands are actually fulfilled. This is also necessary in order

to afford to the army, which would be a third time mobilized for nothing, an external *satisfaction d'honneur*, a show of success in the eyes of foreign countries and the consciousness of having at least stood on foreign territory. Apart from this, if there is no campaign it will give rise to a very bad feeling towards the dynasty, and this would be an extremely serious matter. In case Your Excellency shares these views, I propose that we address Austria to the following effect: The withdrawal of Serbia (in a very submissive form) has been compelled, and we offer our congratulations. In consequence of this, there is naturally no longer any reason for war. A guarantee is, however, very necessary in order that the undertakings shall be executed. This could be obtained by the temporary military occupation of a part of Serbia. Just as in 1871 we kept our troops in France until the milliards had been paid. On this basis I am ready to mediate for peace in Austria. Should there be any contrary proposals or protests on the part of other States, I would uncompromisingly reject them, all the more since all of them are more or less openly appealing to me to help to preserve peace. I shall do this, but in my own fashion, and shall be as considerate as possible of Austria's national sentiment and the military honour of her army. The latter has been appealed to by its highest War Lord, and stands ready to obey the summons. Therefore it must absolutely have a visible *satisfaction d'honneur*, and this is a preliminary condition of my mediation. Will Your Excellency, therefore, prepare a proposal in the sense outlined above for communication to Vienna?

> I have written in the same sense, through Plessen, to the Chief of the General Staff,* who entirely shares my opinion.
>
> "WILLIAM I. R."

On this the *Deutsche Politik* comments:

> "All this incontestably shows that the Kaiser did not desire even the Austro-Serbian war."

In reality, the most one could say is that he did not desire it *at that moment*. We have seen that up to this he had been agreed as to the necessity for war, and even urged it on. On July 25th he was still of the opinion that one must "trample on the feet of this rabble."

Even on July 28th William was not fully aware of the gravity of the situation. He is still playing with fire when he demands a *douce violence*, a gentle pressure on the Serbians, who, in such striking contrast to the fanatical truth-worshippers among the Germans and Austrians, are "sly and false." And it is very characteristic of his military bias and also of his play-acting propensities that he says: "The Army, mobilized the third time for nothing, must now at last be given an outward *satisfaction d'honneur*, a show of success." This is "the preliminary condition of my mediation," on which the peace of the world depends! The satisfaction of the officers' vanity stands higher with him than the peace of the world. In any case, his acknowledgment of the 28th did not materialize into any serious pressure on Austria, who declared war on Serbia that very day, and bombarded Belgrade the next, in order that they might not for the third time have mobilized for nothing.

* General von Moltke.

Now, as formerly, William rejected the best proposals for getting out of the strained situation. This is shown by his remarks on a report of July 28th from Chelins, the German Military Plenipotentiary in St. Petersburg, which William read on the 29th. It runs:

> "For His Majesty: Prince Trubetzkoi, of the Tsar's suite, made the following statement to me to-day: 'Now that Serbia's reply has been published, one must acknowledge her good-will **[One might have expected that!—W.]** to meet Austria's wishes fully and completely; otherwise Serbia would never have answered Austria's unprecedentedly sharp Note in so friendly and neighbourly a tone, but would have simply [word unintelligible]. The two points in dispute could not have been simply accepted by Serbia without danger of a revolution, and the desire to submit them to arbitration **[Austria cannot enter upon that.—W.]**. This is a thoroughly loyal position, and Austria would take on herself a heavy responsibility should she bring about a European war by not recognizing the attitude of Serbia. **[That is what makes me anxious after reading the Serbian reply.—W.]**
>
> "When I replied that the responsibility would fall on Russia, who, after all, was outside the sphere of conflict **[Right!—W.]**, Prince Trubetzkoi said: '. . . We cannot leave our brothers in the lurch. **[Murderers of Kings and Princes!—W.]** Austria might annihilate them **[Doesn't want to.—W.]**, and we cannot allow that. . . . We believe that the German Emperor will give his ally, Austria, sound advice not to strain the bow too far **[These are vague phrases intended to shift the responsibility**

> **on to my shoulders. I repudiate it.—W.]**, to recognize Serbia's good-will in the undertakings given, and to let the disputed points go for decision before the Powers or the Hague Arbitration Court. **[Idiotic.—W.]** Your Kaiser's return has greatly reassured us all, for we trust H.M. and desire no war, nor does the Tsar Nicolas. It would be well if the two monarchs were to come to an understanding by telegram.' **[Has been done. Whether an understanding will result, I doubt.—W.]** This is the view of one of the most influential men at headquarters, and no doubt the view of the whole environment."

We see that also on the 29th William still persisted in denouncing an appeal to the Hague or a conference of the Powers as "idiotic." On the other hand, he is himself doubtful whether direct negotiations of Germany with Russia offer any prospect of success. Accordingly he seems to anticipate a general war as something inevitable, and is anxious, as his comments reveal, not about this fact, but lest through Austria's stupidity he may be burdened with the odium of having brought it about. Nor is it always clear from Bethmann's statements whether he really had the maintenance of peace at heart, or whether, after Bismarck's fashion in 1871, he was anxious that the others should appear as the lamb that had troubled the water. Recollect the telegram of July 27th to Tschirschky, in which he says that we "must appear in the light of having the war forced on us."

The telegram which the Imperial Chancellor sent to the Ambassador in Vienna on July 28th is pitched in the same key. He complains that, in spite of repeated

inquiries, Austria has left Germany in the dark concerning her intentions.

> "The Serbian Government's reply to the Austrian Ultimatum, now to hand, shows that Serbia is willing to meet the Austrian demands to such a comprehensive extent that in the case of a completely intransigeant attitude on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government a gradual estrangement from her of public opinion throughout Europe must be reckoned with.
>
> "According to the statements of the Austrian General Staff, an active military advance against Serbia will not be possible until August 12th. The Imperial [German] Government is therefore placed in the extraordinarily difficult position of being exposed, in the meantime, to the mediation and conference proposals of the other Cabinets, and (if she adheres to her present attitude of reserve in respect of such proposals) of being covered before the world, and ultimately also in the eyes of the German people, with the odium of having caused a world-war. Now on such a basis we cannot launch a successful war on three fronts. It is imperative that the responsibility for any extension of the conflict to those not directly concerned should, in all circumstances, devolve upon Russia."

Bethmann-Hollweg, therefore, advised Vienna to reiterate her definite declaration that she did not seek territorial acquisitions in Serbia, and desired to occupy Belgrade and several points in Serbia only temporarily as guarantee for the fulfilment of the Austrian demands.

> "Should the Russian Government not recognize the justice of this standpoint, it would have against it the public opinion of all Europe, which is turning against Austria. As a further consequence the general diplomatic and, probably, also the military situation would shift very materially in Austria-Hungary's favour.
>
> "Your Excellency will, by return, make an explicit statement to this effect to Count Berchtold, and suggest a corresponding *démarche* in St. Petersburg. In doing so, you must carefully avoid arousing the impression that we wished to hold Austria back. It is solely a question of finding a *modus operandi* that will facilitate the realization of Austria-Hungary's aim, to undermine the foundations of the Great-Serbian propaganda, without at the same time letting loose a world-war; and, if it cannot be finally averted, to improve for us, as far as feasible, the conditions under which it is to be waged."

It may be acknowledged that it is difficult to decide what the Imperial Chancellor had more at heart on July 28th: whether to avoid the world-war or "to improve for us, as far as feasible, the conditions under which it is to be waged."

William himself did not take a very accommodating attitude in respect of the appeal for help addressed to him by the Tsar in his first telegram of July 29th. It runs in the German translation:

> "To H.M. THE KAISER.
>
> "Neues Palais.
>
> "I am glad that you are back. In this so grave moment I implore you to help me. A discreditable

war **[!!—W.]** has been declared on a weak country. The indignation, which I entirely share, is tremendous in Russia. I foresee that very soon the pressure brought to bear upon me will overpower me, and I shall be forced to take far-reaching measures, which will lead to war. In the endeavour to avert such a disaster as a European war, I beg of you, in the name of our old friendship, to do what you can to prevent your ally from going too far. **[In what does that consist?—W.]**—NIKY."

In view of the fact that William himself had just declared there existed no cause for war against Serbia, one might assume that this reference to the terrible consequences of Austria's belligerent action must prompt William to speedy intervention. Nothing of the sort. Nicolas begs him to leave nothing undone to prevent Austria from going too far; William asks: "In what does that consist?"

William considers war against Serbia to be entirely unwarranted, and yet protests by two exclamation marks against this war being called discreditable (discreditable* in German White Book translated by *schmählich*, ignominious, which is too strong).

But William is not satisfied with this. In addition, he appends to the telegram the following reflections:

"Confession of his own weakness and attempt to shift responsibility on to me. The telegram contains a veiled threat, and a request amounting to a command to hold our ally's arm. Should your

* Unwürdig.

Excellency have sent off my telegram last night, it must have crossed this one.*

"We shall now see the effect of mine. The expression 'discreditable war' (*unwürdiger Krieg.*—K.) does not argue a feeling that monarchs must support one another on the part of the Tsar, but a pan-Slav view, which means fear of a *capitis diminutio* in the Balkans in case of Austrian successes. The general effect of these could be calmly awaited before anything is done. Later, there will still be plenty of time to negotiate, and, if necessary, to mobilize, to do which Russia has not the slightest cause at present. Instead of summoning us to stop the Allies, His Majesty ought to apply to the Emperor Francis Joseph and negotiate with him, in order to learn His Majesty's views.

"Ought not copies of both telegrams to be sent to London for the information of H.M. the King?

"The 'Sozi' † are making anti-militarist demonstrations in the streets. This must not be tolerated, at the present moment least of all.

"In the case of a repetition, I shall proclaim a state of siege and have the leaders, all and sundry, *tutti quanti*, interned. Instruct Loebell and Jagow to this effect. We can no longer tolerate Soz. propaganda at the present juncture!"

* This was, in fact, the case. The Tsar's telegram reached Berlin on July 29th at 1 a.m.; the Kaiser's telegram to the Tsar was prepared, according to a draft of Stumm's, at 10.45 p.m. on the 28th, and handed in at the Head Telegraph Office, Berlin, at 1.45 *a.m.* It went off, therefore, after the Tsar's telegram was already in Berlin; the latter is not an answer to the Kaiser's telegram, as one would have to assume according to the German White Book, William's telegram being there dated the 28th at 10.45 p.m., and the Tsar's the 29th at 1 *p.m.*—K.

† Common German abbreviation for Socialists.

This propaganda was directed against Austria's war with Serbia, which William himself described as completely unjustified. In place of restraining his ally, who is endangering the peace of the world, the Kaiser wants "to intern *tutti quanti*" those who protest against the war, and he demands that Austria should be allowed a free hand to wage war and that the "general effect" of her successes should be awaited before anything is done.

CHAPTER XIII

ITALY

AT the time of the dsipatch of the ultimatum to Serbia there still prevailed among the gentlemen who ruled in Berlin and Vienna a reckless self-assurance which believed that victory was already theirs, either diplomatic victory if Russia should submit without a fight to the *capitis diminutio* intended for her (as William expressed it, meaning her shameful degradation), or military victory if Russia allowed herself to be misled into drawing the sword.

But this assurance was based on the expectation that it would be possible (1) to secure the necessary approval of the German public ; (2) to retain Italy as an ally, and (3) to induce England to remain neutral.

Then came Serbia's reply. The more its effect was felt, the more dubious became the general attitude towards Austria and her backers. Thus arose that uncertainty the symptoms of which we have just recognized.

We have seen William's indignation at the " Sozi " (Socialists). His Italian ally had another cause for anxiety in store for him.

Had the conspirators of Potsdam seen things as they really were, and not as they ought to be according to their wishes, they would have understood from the outset that far from reckoning on Italy's support, they should have been prepared for her hostility.

In the Balkans, Italy was as much Austria's rival as Russia. Indeed, the paths of Austria crossed Italy's proposed course far more than that of Russia, since both Italy and Austria desired to expand on the western side of the Balkans. After the annexation of Bosnia by Austria in 1909 there had therefore been a marked *rapprochement* between Russia and Italy in Balkan policy.

Serbia also might well become a competitor with Italian Imperialism in the Balkans. But in those days it was still a small country, with 3,000,000 inhabitants, that is to say, quite harmless in comparison with the great Habsburg Monarchy with its 50,000,000 of population.

And not only the imperialism but also the democracy of Italy was antagonistic to Austria, who oppressed and persecuted the million of Italians in her territories.

In reality Italy was Germany's ally only, and not Austria's. Between the Italians and the Austrians there was bitter enmity; an enmity so great that as early as 1909 the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, Conrad von Hötzendorff, had urged war against Italy. The temper of the Austrian staff officers and diplomats had not been improved by the fact that in 1913 Italy had thwarted Austria's plans for a war against Serbia.

So little did the conspirators trust their "ally" that they considered it necessary to keep the secret of their enterprise against Serbia most carefully from her, as well as from the rest of the world. Italy's surprise at the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was not only apparent, like that of Germany; it was genuine.

That the Italian Government was deeply incensed at this was to be expected; and even if they had been willing to stand by Austria it would have been difficult for them to do so. In Italy public opinion at once took

the side of Serbia against Austria. But an Italian Government was far less its own master than a German or an Austrian. It dared not risk a conflict with a strongly expressed popular feeling.

In these circumstances the only way to win over Italy might have been for Austria to afford Italy ample compensation, such a compensation as the people also would accept ; for example, the cession of the Trentino.

A policy marked by ordinary foresight would have made sure of this point before committing itself to the hazard of war—if it considered war necessary at all. From their own imperialistic point of view William and Bethmann ought to have demanded from Austria the assurance that she was ready to make definite concessions to Italy, before they promised in Potsdam unreserved support to Austria in a war against Serbia.

But they were in too great a hurry for this. The venture which brought about the terrible world-war was —quite apart from all moral considerations—started with such stupidity and levity that in Berlin they did not even think of first binding Vienna to compensate Italy. They never even inquired what were the objects aimed at in a war against Serbia. It was only afterwards that they began to think either about the war-aims or about Italy. Ten days after the Potsdam conference, on July 15th, Jagow telegraphed to Tschirschky in Vienna :

> " Just as Italian popular opinion is in general Austrophobe, so it has so far always shown itself Serbophil. I have no doubt that in a conflict between Austria and Serbia it will be pronouncedly on the side of Serbia. A territorial expansion of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, even an extension

of its influence in the Balkans, is detested in Italy and regarded as an injury to Italy's position there. In consequence of an optical delusion, in face of the inevitable threat by her neighbour Austria, the Slav danger, which is really much greater, is not recognized. Quite apart from the fact that the policy of the Government in Italy depends materially upon the variations of public opinion, the above view is that which is held by the majority of Italian statesmen. On every occasion that there has been a question of a threat to Serbia by Austria I have noticed an extraordinary nervousness. If Italy took the side of Serbia this would unquestionably and materially encourage Russia's desire for action. In St. Petersburg they would calculate that Italy would not only not fulfil her pledges to the alliance, but, wherever possible, act directly against Austria-Hungary. And a collapse of the Monarchy would also open up for Italy the prospect of gaining some long-desired territories.

"It is therefore, in my opinion, of the greatest importance that Vienna should come to an arrangement with the Cabinet in Rome about the objects to be pursued in Serbia, in case of a conflict, and should keep Italy on her side, or—as a conflict with Serbia alone does not mean a *casus fœderis*—strictly neutral. By her agreements with Austria, Italy has a right to compensation in case of any alteration in the Balkans in favour of the Danube Monarchy. This compensation would form the object and the bait for the negotiations with Italy. According to our information the cession of Valona, for example, would not be regarded in Rome as an acceptable compensation. Italy seems at present to have

given up altogether the desire to establish herself on the *altera sponda* of the Adriatic.

"As I may state in the strictest confidence, the acquisition of the Trentino will alone be considered ample compensation in Italy. This morsel would, moreover, be so dainty that it might also suffice to close the mouth of Austrophobe public opinion. That the surrender of a strip of the ancient territory of the Monarchy would be very difficult to reconcile with the feelings of the ruler and of the people of Austria, cannot be denied. But, on the other hand, the question is, what is the value of Italy's attitude for Austrian policy, what price one is willing to pay for it, and whether that price is in proportion to the gain desired in another direction?

"I beg your Excellency to make the attitude of Italy the subject of a thorough confidential discussion with Count Berchtold, and, if possible, to touch on the question of compensation at the same time. Whether in this conversation the question of the Trentino can be raised, I must leave to your judgment and knowledge of how feeling is disposed in Vienna.

"The attitude of Italy will in any case be of importance for Russia's attitude in the Serbian conflict. If a general conflagration should result from the latter it would be of the greatest military importance for us also.

"To avoid misunderstanding, I may observe further that we have made no communication of any kind to the Rome Cabinet regarding the negotiations between Vienna and Berlin, and that the question of compensation has therefore not been discussed by us."

It was easy for Jagow to talk! He ought to have known the stupidity and stubbornness of his Austrian friends better. They would not hear of compensation in Vienna.

On July 20th Tschirschky thus reports an interview with Berchtold:

> "Count Berchtold said that in his opinion, as things lay, the question of compensation would not now become a real one at all. In yesterday's discussion, at Count Tisza's instigation in particular, as he had emphasized that neither he nor any Hungarian Government could agree to a strengthening of the Slav element in the Monarchy by the annexation of part of Serbia, it was decided to waive any permanent incorporation of foreign territory. Any valid reason which Italy might have for demanding compensation would thus disappear. To my remark that on Italy's part even the overthrow of Serbia and the consequent extension of the influence of the Monarchy in the Balkans would be regarded as injuring her position and would lead to protests, the Minister thought that this point of view was in contradiction to the repeated declarations of the Marquis of San Giuliano, that Italy required a strong Austria."

After the Austrian Count had uttered this profound piece of wisdom, he went on to talk of the principle of nationality, which had been broken by Italy herself in the occupation of Libya, and continued:

> "If, however, in Rome they cannot imagine at present a far-reaching Austro-Italian co-operation as a matter of practical politics, we reply that there

> is no need for anything of the sort. Austria demands neither co-operation nor support, but simply abstention from hostile action against an ally."

To the Minister, in his eagerness for action, the Italians caused no anxiety.

> " He had no illusions regarding the anti-Austrian and pro-Serb feelings of San Giuliano and of the Italians, but was firmly convinced that for military reasons and reasons of domestic politics Italy could hardly think of active intervention. Herr von Merey (the Austrian Ambassador in Rome) believed, and he, the Minister, considered this opinion well-founded, that San Giuliano's main object was to bluff Austria and seek shelter for himself from Italian public opinion."

After such proofs of levity and stupidity, the German Government ought to have felt serious qualms about entering with such an ally into an adventure which threatened to lead to " a general conflagration."

William himself, however, remained at first still optimistic.

Jagow telegraphed to him on July 25th a report from Flotow in Rome, which had been sent off from there on the evening of the 24th. It says :

> " In a conference, fairly excited and lasting several hours, with the Premier Salandra and the Marquis di San Giuliano, the latter laid it down that the spirit of the Triple Alliance Treaty demanded that in so momentous a step by Austria she should previously have come to an arrangement with her allies. As this had not been done with Italy, Italy

cannot consider herself bound as regards any further consequences of this step.

" Besides " (he said) " Article 7 of the Triple Alliance Treaty (which I have not at hand here) demands that in alterations in the Balkans the contracting parties should previously come to an arrangement, and that if one of the contracting parties brings about territorial changes, the other should be compensated.

" To my remark that, so far as I knew, Austria had declared she did not seek territorial acquisitions, the Minister said that a declaration to this effect had only been given with considerable limitations. Austria had rather declared she did not at present seek territorial acquisitions, making a reservation regarding any other decisions which might later become necessary. The Minister thought that he would therefore not be blamed if he took precautionary measures in good time

" The text of the Austrian Note was composed in such exceedingly aggressive and tactless language that the whole of public opinion in Europe, and with it Italy **[She wanted to go quietly hunting in Albania, and this has irritated Austria.—W.]** would be against Austria. No Italian Government could fight against this. **[Bosh !—W.]**

" My impression is that the only possibility of retaining Italy is promptly to promise her compensation **[The little thief must always be grabbing something.—W.]** if Austria is planning territorial acquisitions or the occupation of Lovcen."

Jagow remarks on this telegram that the Italian Ambassador in Berlin, Bollati, had demanded compensation,

otherwise Italy's policy must be directed towards preventing an extension of Austrian territory. William underlines the word "compensation" and adds "Albania." At the close of the telegram, however, he makes the classic observation :

> **"This is utter twaddle and will all settle itself in the course of events."**

In the Foreign Office and even in the General Staff, however, Italy's attitude was regarded with less optimism, and William himself began, after he was on shore again, to consider things somewhat more soberly, especially when he saw the effect of the Serbian reply.

The German Government continued to urge Austria to grant compensation to Italy

Flotow reported on July 25th from Rome :

> "At yesterday's discussion with Salandra and the Marquis di San Giuliano, which repeatedly led to sharp encounters between the Marquis di San Giuliano and myself, three points seemed to be marked on the Italian side : firstly, fear of public opinion in Italy ; secondly, consciousness of military weakness, and thirdly, the desire to gain something for Italy out of this opportunity, if possible, the Trentino."

On this Bethmann-Hollweg remarks :

> "*His Majesty considers it absolutely necessary that Austria should in good time come to terms with Italy on the question of compensation. Herr von Tschirschky is to be told this in order that he may inform Count Berchtold by special command of his Majesty.*"

Flotow continues in his report :

"The possibility that Italy might eventually even turn against Austria was not directly mentioned by Count di San Giuliano, but it came out in gentle hints. . . . As already reported, the Marquis di San Giuliano, on the ground of the composition of the Austrian Note, emphatically championed the thesis that Austria's procedure against Serbia was an aggressive one, that therefore all intervention by Russia and France that might result would not make the war a defensive one, and that there would not be a *casus fœderis*. I vigorously combated this view, if only for tactical reasons. But Italy will probably stick to this possibility of slipping out.

"The total result is thus : In the event of a European conflict arising, one can hardly reckon on Italy's active assistance. So far as it is possible to foresee to-day, a directly hostile attitude by Italy to Austria might be prevented by skilful behaviour on the part of Austria."

On the 26th Flotow continues :

"The Marquis di San Giuliano continues to tell me that Austria's procedure is exceedingly serious for Italy, as Austria might use the same tactics to-morrow against Italy with respect to the Irredenta. Italy therefore cannot give her approval to such steps. According to confidential reports from Bucharest, His Majesty the King of Rumania is of the same opinion with regard to the Rumanians living in Hungary. . . .

"The Minister still does not believe the Austrian

> assurances that no Serbian territory is to be claimed. . . . The Minister again hinted that without compensation Italy would be forced to cross the path of Austria."

Whoever wished really to serve the cause of the peace of the world ought of course, to urge upon Austria above all things to be content with the Serbian reply. Instead of this, pressure was placed upon Austria to come to an arrangement with Italy in order that she might be stronger in the case of the Serbian war becoming a European conflict. The more this probability increased, the more urgent became the admonitions to Vienna.

On the 26th, Bethmann-Hollweg telegraphs to Tschirschky in Vienna:

> "The Chief of the General Staff also considers it urgently necessary that Italy should be firmly retained in the Triple Alliance. An arrangement between Vienna and Rome is therefore necessary. Vienna must not evade an agreement by disputable interpretations of the Treaty, but must make her decisions in keeping with the gravity of the situation."

The demands became more and more urgent. On the 27th, Jagow telegraphs to the ambassador in Vienna:

> "His Majesty the Kaiser considers it absolutely necessary that Austria should promptly come to an arrangement with Italy regarding Article 7, and the question of compensation. His Majesty has expressly commanded that your Excellency should communicate this to Count Berchtold."

But neither the Chief of Staff nor the Kaiser himself succeeded in overcoming the passive resistance of the gentlemen of the Ballplatz, who had once made up their minds to see in the Italians not an ally but an enemy.

And like Italy, on account of this sullen perverseness, the other ally whom Germany still had, Rumania, also threatened to fail her.

This must have given rise to serious anxiety, and still more the attitude of England.

CHAPTER XIV

ENGLAND

Up to July 29th

THE German Government had expected that they would succeed in keeping England neutral if it should come to a conflict with Russia and France. They could rely upon open rebellion appearing imminent in Ireland and on the fact that the pacifist idea was nowhere stronger than in England, not only among the working classes, but also in a considerable section of the bourgeoisie. Even among many middle-class elements, who had no objection to a colonial war, there was a horror of a European war with its destructive economic consequences.

Thus the German Government was justified in expecting that there would be strong opposition in the English Parliament to a war with Germany. But it forgot this was only true of an offensive and unprovoked war. The German naval armaments had filled the whole population of England with increasing anxiety about a German invasion. A war to overthrow France or even the occupation of Belgium by Germany must strongly arouse the English people to defend themselves.

The German Government does not seem to have considered this possibility seriously. Their whole procedure was based upon the presupposition of English neutrality.

In a report by Pourtalès of a conversation with Sasonow (on July 21) it is stated :

> " In the course of the conversation the Minister repeatedly pointed out that, according to the information at his disposal, the situation was considered serious in Paris and in London also. He was obviously endeavouring to give me the impression that in England also the attitude of Austria-Hungary was very much disapproved."

With great determination, William remarked on this : " **He is wrong.**" If he had read Lichnowsky's reports with greater attention and fewer preconceived ideas, he would have been more cautious.

But it is correct that the English Government, on the outbreak of the conflict between Austria and Serbia, at first endeavoured to take up a neutral attitude in order to negotiate between Austria and Russia.

The English King spoke to the same effect at this time to William's brother, Prince Henry.

The latter wrote on July 28th from Kiel :

> " My dear William,
>
> " Before my departure from London, to be exact on Sunday morning (July 26th), I had, at my own request, a short conversation with Georgie, who was perfectly clear regarding the seriousness of the present situation, and assured me that he and his Government would leave no plan untried to localize the struggle between Austria and Serbia. His Government had therefore made the proposal that Germany, England, France and Italy—as you, of course, already know—should intervene in the

endeavour to keep Russia in check. He hoped that Germany would be able, in spite of her alliance with Austria, to join in this plan to prevent a European war, to which, so he said, we were nearer than ever before. He continued in these exact words: 'We shall try all we can to keep out of this and shall remain neutral.' (*Wir werden alles aufbieten nicht hineingezogen zu werden und werden neutral bleiben.*) That this utterance was meant seriously I am convinced, as I am of the fact that England will remain neutral. Whether she will be able to do so permanently I cannot say, but have my doubts in view of the relationship with France.

"Georgie was in a very serious mood, reasoned logically and was most seriously and honestly endeavouring to avert the possible world conflagration, in which endeavour he relied greatly upon your assistance.

"I communicated the substance of the conversation to Lichnowsky (*as early as July 26th*—K.) with the request that he would transmit it to the Chancellor.

"Your faithful and obedient brother,

"HENRY."

The report of this conversation is not distinguished by superfluous logic. He says the English Government proposes that Germany, England, France and Italy should combine to keep Russia in check, and hopes that her alliance with Austria will not prevent Germany from joining in this plan. It is obvious that the alliance could only come into consideration if it was a question of keeping Austria in check. "Georgie" probably

spoke of Russia and Austria. We will, therefore, not at once contest the trustworthiness of the whole letter on account of senility *à la* Szögyeny. As to the question of neutrality, it is obvious that all that was said was, we shall endeavour to remain neutral so long as we can. Henry himself doubts whether this will be possible permanently. William, however, saw in this a promise binding in all circumstances.

Even before the ultimatum to Serbia he had thus interpreted English neutrality, which he not only expected but to a certain degree demanded as his just right, to mean that England must restrain from any pressure on Austria and allow the latter a free hand.

This is clear from his notes on a report by Lichnowsky on July 22nd. We reproduce this in full, with William's comments in brackets :

> "Sir Edward Grey will, as I learn confidentially, to-morrow tell Count Mensdorff that the British Government will exert its influence to get the Austrian demands accepted by the Serbian Government, if they are modified, and made reconcilable with the independence of the Serbian kingdom. **[It is not his duty to judge these demands, that is the affair of His Majesty Franz Josef.—W.]** He also thinks that Sasonow will use his influence in Belgrade in the same direction. But it is, he thinks, a necessary premise to this attitude that no unproven accusations *à la* Friedjung be preferred from Vienna, and that the Austro-Hungarian Government should be in a position to establish absolutely the connexion between the murder at Serajevo and political circles in Belgrade. **[That is their own affair.—W.]** Everything depends on

the way the Note is composed in Vienna, and on the results of the investigation so far made. It is impossible to make representations in Belgrade on the basis of wanton statements. **[What is wanton ? How can Grey use such a word about the venerable old gentleman ?—W.]**

"I am working in the meanwhile in the endeavour to get them to intercede for an unconditional acceptance of the Austrian demands, considering the legitimate demand of Austria for satisfaction and a final cessation of the constant troubles, even if it should not take fully into account the national dignity of Serbia. **[There is none.—W.]**

"In doing this, I meet with the expectation that our influence in Vienna has succeeded in suppressing demands which cannot be fulfilled. **[How would that come within my province ? It does not concern me at all ! What is the meaning of 'cannot be fulfilled ?' The scoundrels have carried on their agitation with murder and must be humbled ! This is a monstrous piece of British impudence. It is not my duty to prescribe à la Grey to His Majesty the Emperor regarding the preservation of his honour.—W.]** They reckon definitely that we would not identify ourselves with demands which obviously aim at bringing about a war and that we will not support a policy which only uses the Serajevo murder as a pretext for furthering Austrian desires in the Balkans, and for the destruction of the Peace of Bucharest. Moreover, Sir Edward Grey has again informed me to-day that he is endeavouring to exert influence in St. Petersburg from the Austrian point of view. But it has not made a pleasant impression here that Count

Berchtold has so far quite markedly avoided speaking about the Serbian question with Sir Maurice de Bunsen."

Jagow adds to this report of Lichnowsky's:

"Your Majesty's Ambassador in London is receiving instructions to be careful in his language, and that we did not know the Austrian demands, but considered them Austria-Hungary's internal affairs, regarding which it would not be proper for us to intervene."

On this William observes:

"Right! This ought, however, to be told very seriously and clearly to Grey so that he may see that I stand no trifling. Grey is making the mistake of placing Serbia on the same level as Austria and other great Powers. This is unheard of! Serbia is a band of robbers, which must be laid hold of for their crimes. I shall interfere in nothing which the Emperor alone is entitled to decide. I have been expecting this dispatch and it does not surprise me. Regular British way of thinking, and condescendingly commanding tone, which I will not have."

In this fashion did William think to gain English neutrality. Of course his diplomats poured water in his fermenting wine, but the material difficulty remained: the antagonism between the Austrian and English point of view was too great for England to have been able to continue, as she intended, to intervene for Austria and place a check exclusively on Russia.

This became clear at once after the publication of the Austrian ultimatum. By the 24th July Lichnowsky reports:

"Sir Edward Grey has just requested me to come to him. The Minister was obviously deeply affected by the Austrian Note, which, in his view, surpassed anything he had ever seen of this kind. He said he had so far no news from St. Petersburg, and therefore did not know how the matter was being regarded there. He doubted very much, however, whether it would be possible for the Russian Government to recommend the Serbian Government to accept unconditionally the Austrian demands. A state which accepted such proposals would really cease to count as an independent state. **[This would be very desirable. It is not a state in the European sense, but a band of robbers.—W.]** It was difficult for him, Sir E. Grey, also to give any advice in St. Petersburg at this moment. He could only hope that a mild **[! !—W.]** and calm interpretation of the situation would hold the field there. So long as it was a question of a . . . localized struggle between Austria and Serbia, the matter did not concern him (Sir E. Grey) **[Right !—W.]**; but the situation would at once be different if public opinion in Russia forced the Government to proceed against Austria.

"To my observation that one cannot judge the Balkan States by the same standard as the more advanced European nations **[Right, that they are certainly not.—W.]** and that, therefore, a different kind of language must be used towards them—the barbaric style of their warfare had already

shown that—than towards Britons or Germans, for example **[Right.—W.]**, the Minister replied that, although he might share this view, he did not believe that it would be shared in Russia. **[But then the Russians are no better.—W.]**

"The danger of a European war if Austria entered Serbian soil **[This will certainly happen.—W.]** would become immediate. The results of such a war of four belligerents—he expressly emphasized four, and meant Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany and France **[He forgets Italy.—W.]**—it was quite impossible to foresee. Whatever course the situation took, one thing was certain: that there would be complete exhaustion and impoverishment; industry and commerce would be ruined, and the power of capital destroyed. Revolutionary movements, as in 1848, would be the result in consequence of the ruin of industry. **[!—W.]**

"What Sir Edward Grey most lamented, besides the tone of the Note, was the short time-limit, which made war almost inevitable. He said to me that he would be ready to make representations with us in Vienna for a prolongation of the period **[Useless.—W.]**, as then a way out might perhaps be found. **[? ! !—W.]** He asked me to transmit this proposal to your Excellency.

"He further suggested that in case of a dangerous tension, the four Powers not immediately concerned—England, Germany, France and Italy—should undertake negotiation between Russia and Austria. **[This is superfluous, as Austria has already made matters clear to Russia, and Grey can propose nothing else. I am not intervening—only if Austria expressly asks me to, which is not probable. One**

does not consult others in matters of honour and vital questions.—W.]

"The Minister is clearly trying to do everything to prevent European complications, and could not conceal his great regret at the challenging tone of the Austrian Note and the short time-limit.

"From another source I was informed in the Foreign Office that there was reason to assume that Austria considerably underestimated Serbia's power of resistance. In any case, it would be a long and desperate struggle, which would greatly weaken Austria and cause her to bleed to death. **[Nonsense! it may bring England Persia.—W.]** They also claim to know that Rumania's attitude is more than uncertain, and that it had been stated in Bucharest that they would be against the party who attacked."

Three points are particularly noteworthy in this document:

Firstly, the serenity with which William still contemplated war on July 26th. That Austria may bleed to death in it he declares to be nonsense. The fear that it will bring economic ruin and revolution to all belligerents seems to him so ludicrous that he marks the passage with an exclamation point.

Secondly, we see that William, on July 26th, when he read Lichnowsky's report, still reckoned on Italy's entry into the war—of course, on Germany's side.

Finally, however, it is to be noted that Grey describes the war which he fears as one of four participants only; he says nothing of England. He is, therefore, endeavouring to remain neutral—and he had to if he was to appear as an intermediary.

But for the success of this intervention it was necessary that Germany should also be honourably neutral. This appeared doubtful from the very first, and in the course of the negotiations the suspicion became stronger and stronger that she was only using her neutral attitude as a pretext to be able unostentatiously to assist Austria, who allowed nothing to lead her from her policy of war.

England had to reckon with the possibility that Germany, with Austria, was pressing for a war against Russia and France, in which, in alliance with Italy, she could be certain of victory. If this view was correct, then it was to be feared that Germany would be strengthened in her bellicose tendencies by the prospect of England's neutrality. It was therefore necessary to warn Germany that she must not count on this neutrality. This warning might still save peace, which was dangerously threatened. It was given on July 29th.

July 29th.

The warning fell on prepared soil. We have already given an account of the revulsion of feeling in Berlin, which began on July 28th, produced by the Socialist demonstrations against war in Berlin. Then by Lichnowsky's representations and Italy's perverseness, which caused the possibility to arise that out of the joyful war of two against two there might develop a very disagreeable one of two against four.

Bethmann now endeavoured to win England by promises.

In a conversation with Sir Edward Goschen on July 29th he observes :

> "We can assure the English Cabinet—provided its attitude were neutral—that we, even in the event of a war, do not aim at territorial acquisitions at the expense of France in Europe. We can further assure them that we shall respect the neutrality and integrity of Holland, so long as it is respected by our opponents."

At the same time, he even then prepares the way for the invasion of Belgium:

> "As regards Belgium, we do not know to what counter-measures the action of France in any war that might arise might force us. But assuming that Belgium does not take sides against us, we would be ready, even in this case, to give an assurance by which Belgium's integrity would remain intact after the conclusion of the war.
>
> "These conditional assurances seemed to us suitable foundations for a further understanding with England, for which our policy has hitherto been continually working. The assurance of a neutral attitude by England in the present conflict would enable me to make a general neutrality agreement in the future, of which it would be premature to discuss the details in the present moment."

The composition of this sentence in English (would . . . moment) gave Bethmann great difficulty. He had first written (in German):

> "And we would be able to reply to the suggestion of a general treaty of neutrality with a naval understanding."

He then struck out the sentence, and wrote :

> " Would create for us the possibility of looking forward to a general treaty of neutrality in the future. I cannot to-day go into the details and basis of such a treaty, as England would give her views on the whole question."

But this version also did not please him, and so he chose the English given above.

This searching for the right expression is very characteristic. Immediately before the war Bethmann-Hollweg was endeavouring to induce England to abandon France and Belgium to the superior strength of Germany. He would have only had a prospect of attaining this, if he gave England the most satisfactory assurances regarding German world and naval policy. Even then the prospect was not great, for, in contrast to the promises, there was the reality of the German fleet. Nevertheless, success might have been considered possible. Yet even then, when Germany was advancing towards that terrible crisis, Bethmann-Hollweg could not decide even to mention a naval agreement as a bait ; he could produce nothing but a vague phrase about a " general treaty of neutrality for the future," which, of course, offered not the slightest guarantee that a victorious Germany would not turn its then irresistible superiority against England.

The offer was then very vigorously rejected by Grey as a scandalous suggestion for the conclusion of a bargain with Germany at the expense of France, whose colonies were to be surrendered to Germany. But even before the English Government received the news of the proposal, it had already warned Germany seriously,

and informed her that England was ready to mediate between Austria and Serbia, as well as Russia, but that she could not promise her neutrality in a war between Germany and France.

This communication, which was really a matter of course, came upon William like a thunderbolt. Rage and fear strove within him, and, as we shall see immediately, caused him completely to lose his head. On July 29th Lichnowsky sent two dispatches to Berlin. In the one he said, among other things, that Sir Edward Grey regarded the situation as exceedingly grave:

> "A telegram yesterday from Sir Maurice de Bunsen [British Ambassador in Vienna.—K.] made an unpleasant impression upon him; according to it, Count Berchtold had absolutely rejected Sasonow's proposal to empower Count Szapary [Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg.—K.] to enter with him into a discussion of the dispute between Serbia and Austria."

The Minister then further discussed the possibilities of mediation and an understanding to prevent the world-war.

More important is the next dispatch:

> "Sir Edward Grey has just sent for me again. The Minister was absolutely calm, but very grave, and received me with the words—that the situation was coming more and more to a head. **[The greatest and most scandalous piece of English Pharisaism that I have ever seen! I shall never make a naval agreement with such rascals.—W.]** Sasonow has declared that after the declaration

of war [Against Serbia.—K.] he will no longer be in a position to negotiate with Austria direct, and has made a request here to resume intervention. **[In spite of the Tsar's appeal to me! I am thus shoved aside.—W.]** The Russian Government regards the cessation of hostilities for the present as a necessary preliminary to this mediation.

"Sir Edward Grey repeated his suggestion, already reported, that we should take part in a mediation *à quatre*, which we had already accepted in principle. He personally thought that a suitable foundation for mediation would be that Austria should announce her terms—for example, after occupying Belgrade or other places. **[Good! We have been endeavouring to attain this for days past. In vain!—W.]** If your Excellency would, however, undertake mediation, a prospect of which I held out this morning, this would, of course, suit him equally well. But mediation appeared to him to be urgently required if a European catastrophe were not to result. **[Instead of mediation, a serious word in St. Petersburg and Paris, to the effect that England is not assisting them, would at once restore the situation.—W.]**

"Sir E. Grey then said to me that he had a friendly and private communication to make, namely, that he did not wish our personal relations, which had been so friendly, and our intimate exchange of ideas on all political questions to mislead me, and he wished himself to be spared the reproach **[It remains.—W.]** of insincerity afterwards. **[Aha! the low swindler!—W.]**

"The British Government wished, as before, to continue our previous friendly relations, and so long

as the dispute was confined to Austria and Russia, would stand aside. **[This means, we are to leave Austria in the lurch. Most mean and Mephistophelean! But genuinely English.—W.]** But if we and France became involved, the situation would at once be altered, and in certain circumstances the British Government might find itself forced to take rapid decisions. **[Taken already.—W.]** In this case, it would not do to stand aside and wait long. **[*i.e.*, they will fall upon us.—W.]** If war broke out, it would be the greatest catastrophe which the world had ever seen. He was far from wishing to use any kind of threat, he only wished to protect me from disappointments and himself from the reproach of insincerity **[Failed completely. He has been insincere all these years down to his latest speech.—W.]**, and therefore chose (to communicate this to me in) the form of a private conversation.

"Sir Edward Grey added, however, that the Government **[We also!—W.]** must take account of public **[Newly created!—W.]** opinion. **[If they wish it, they can turn and direct public opinion, as the Press absolutely obeys them.—W.]** So far, this had been, on the whole, favourable to Austria, as the justice of a certain degree of satisfaction was recognized, but now it was beginning to swing round completely as a result of Austrian stubbornness. **[With the help of the Jingo Press!—W.]**

"To my Italian colleague, who has just left me, Sir Edward Grey said he believed if mediation were undertaken Austria would be able to procure every possible satisfaction; there would be no

question of a humiliating retreat by Austria, as the Serbs would, in any case, be chastised, and with Russia's approval forced to subordinate themselves to Austria's wishes. Austria could thus obtain guarantees for the future without a war which would put the peace of Europe in danger.

"LICHNOWSKY."

To this William adds the following Note:

"England is coming out in her true colours at the moment when she thinks that we are hemmed in like a hunted animal, and, so to speak, disposed of. The vulgar mob of shopkeepers tried to deceive us with dinners and speeches. The grossest deceit is the message the King sent me by Henry, 'We shall remain neutral, and try to keep out of this as long as possible.' Grey gives the King the lie, and these words to Lichnowsky are the outcome of an evil conscience, because he feels he has deceived us. Besides, it is really a threat, combined with bluff, to break us from Austria and prevent mobilization, and shift the guilt of the war. He knows quite well that if he only speaks a single sharp, serious word in Paris and St. Petersburg, and warns them to remain neutral, both will at once be still. But he refrains from uttering the word, and threatens us instead! The low cur! England alone bears the responsibility for war and peace, not we any longer! This must be made clear to the world."

The immoderation of his language shows clearly the high degree of disappointment felt by William at

Grey's hint, which every trained politician with any degree of judgment must have foreseen, which Prince Henry also had expected when King George told him he would endeavour to remain neutral as long as possible.

Already in the report of July 18th of the Bavarian Councillor of Legation, Schön, which has been published by Eisner, it had been stated:

> "A war between the Dual Alliance and Triple Entente would be little welcome to England at the present moment, if only on account of the situation in Ireland. If it comes to that, however, according to the opinion held here, we would, nevertheless, find our English cousins on the enemy's side, as England fears that France, in the event of defeat, would sink to the level of a second-rate power, and thus the 'balance of power' would be destroyed, the maintenance of which England considers imperative in her own interest."

William had quite forgotten this in his political calculations, and he had interpreted the striving after neutrality as far as possible at the stage of mediation, which Grey held in prospect, as a binding promise of neutrality in all circumstances, even in the event of a war against France; nay, he went so far as to regard neutrality as an obligation on England's part blindly to support German policy in St. Petersburg and Paris.

A more senseless policy can hardly be imagined.

The next day William expressed himself in even greater detail on the English warning, in connection with a report from Herr von Pourtalès in St. Petersburg, of a conversation with Sasonow.

The Russian Minister endeavoured to persuade the

German Ambassador to recommend to the German Government the eagerly desired "participation in a conversation *à quatre*, to find a way of inducing Austria by friendly means **[Is the Russian mobilization a friendly means ?—W.]** to drop the demands which infringe the sovereignty of Serbia."

This sensible proposal, which made the maintenance of peace probable, and of which "in principle" the German Foreign Office had expressed approval to England, met with the opposition of the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, who waived it aside with the intelligent remark :

> "Russia is demanding that we should do to Austria what Austria is being reproached for doing to Serbia."

On this ludicrous view, William promptly remarks, "Very good."

Herr Pourtalès then tries to persuade Sasonow to allow Austria a free hand in Serbia :

> "At the conclusion of peace there will still be time enough to come back to the question of Serbian sovereignty." **[Good.—W.]**

After the German Ambassador, with the lively approval of his Imperial master, had worked in this admirable fashion to mediate between Russia and Austria, he began to speak of the Russian partial mobilization, which followed the Austrian, and uttered, "No threat but only a friendly warning."

> "Sasonow declared that the cancelling of the order for mobilization was no longer possible, and

that the Austrian mobilization was to blame for this."

On this William writes a long essay:

"If the mobilization can no longer be cancelled—which is not true—why, then, did the Tsar appeal for my intervention three days later, without mentioning the issue of the order for mobilization? Surely this shows clearly that even to him the mobilization appeared premature, and he afterwards took this step toward us *pro forma* to calm his awakened conscience, although he knew that it was no longer of any avail, as he did not feel himself strong enough to stop the mobilization. For this leaves me without the slightest doubt any longer: England, Russia and France have agreed—taking as a basis our *casus fœderis* with Austria—using the Austro-Serbian conflict as a pretext, to wage a war of destruction against us. Hence Grey's cynical observation to Lichnowsky: that so long as the war remained confined to Austria and Russia, England would stand aside, but only if we and France became involved he would be forced to become active against us, *i.e.*, either we are basely to betray our Ally and abandon her to Russia—and thus break up the Triple Alliance, or, remaining faithful to our Ally, are to be set upon by the Triple Entente together and chastised, by which their envy will finally have the satisfaction of completely ruining all of us. This, in a nutshell, is the true, naked situation, which, slowly and surely set in motion and continued by Edward VII., has been systematically developed by disclaimed conversations of England with Paris and

St. Petersburg, and finally brought to its culmination and set in motion by George V. At the same time, the stupidity and clumsiness of our Ally is made a trap for us. The celebrated 'encircling' of Germany thus finally became an accomplished fact, in spite of all the endeavours of our politicians and diplomats to prevent it. The net is suddenly drawn over our heads, and with a mocking laugh England reaps the most brilliant success of her assiduously conducted, purely anti-German world-policy. Against this we have proved powerless, while, as a result of our fidelity to our ally, Austria, she has us isolated, wriggling in the net, and draws the noose for our political and economic destruction. A splendid achievement, which compels admiration even from one who is ruined by it ! Edward VII. after his death is stronger than I who am alive ! And there were people who thought we could win over or satisfy England by this or that trifling measure ! ! ! She unceasingly and relentlessly pursued her aim with notes (armament), holiday proposals, scares, Haldane, etc., until she had reached it. And we ran into the noose, and even introduced the ship for ship ratio in naval building in the touching hope that this would pacify England ! ! ! All warnings, all requests on my part were without avail. Now we get what the English call thanks for it. From the dilemma of fidelity to our alliance with the venerable old Emperor is created the situation which gives England the desired pretext to destroy us, with the hypocritical semblance of right, namely, of helping France to maintain the notorious balance of power, that is to say, the playing of all European states in England's favour

> against us! Now the whole scheme must be ruthlessly exposed, the mask of Christian readiness for peace which England has shown to the world must be rudely torn off, and her Pharisaic protestation of peace pilloried! And our Consuls in Turkey and India, our agents, etc., must rouse the whole Mohammedan world to a wild rebellion against this hated, deceitful, unscrupulous nation of shopkeepers. For if we are to bleed to death, England shall at least lose India."

This philippic stamps the character of William. After his conspiracy with Austria had brought Germany into so fearful a position, he does not think of how to get her out of it again, but only of the theatrical effect of how he will ruthlessly expose the whole scheming of his enemies, roughly tearing the mask of Christian readiness for peace, and pilloring the Pharisaical protestations of peace.

He has completely forgotten his own scheming, which does not bear exposure at all, with its corresponding "Christian readiness for peace," and "Pharisaical protestations of peace."

But at the same time the war seemed to him already certain. The only thing which it occurs to him to do, after his pompous flourishes, is not to attempt to save peace, but only to appeal for a rebellion of the whole Mohammedan world. He is already reconciled to the idea of Germany bleeding to death in the coming war if only England suffers also from it. But at bottom this whole confused note only shows that he had completely lost his head. Italy's refusal and England's warning knocked the Kaiser on the head, and deprived him of the remnants of his judgment.

CHAPTER XV

LAST EFFORTS TO PRESERVE PEACE

DIFFERENT was the effect on the civilian Chancellor. He endeavoured to save what could still be saved. For this end, however, it was becoming urgently necessary to evolve some other attitude to Austria than that of "Nibelungen-fidelity." The latter's stupidity and stubbornness had resulted not only in a European war threatening to break out overnight—to this they might have reconciled themselves, as the possibility had been reckoned on from the first—but this stupidity and stubbornness threatened to have the result that the Central Powers would enter the war in the most unfavourable circumstances, without Italy, perhaps against Italy, and against England, and burdened before their own people with the terrible and crippling reproach that they had wantonly provoked this dreadful catastrophe.

The strongest pressure had to be exerted on Vienna to induce her to adopt a more intelligent policy at the eleventh hour.

But this tendency was in contradiction to another, and a militarist tendency, which, once the mobilization had begun, considered war inevitable, and, simply because the number of the enemy was so great, urged

striking as quickly as possible, as the only chance of holding their own. It was argued that by a few unexpected and decisive blows military preponderance might be gained, wavering Italy perhaps won over, and England overawed.

Two conflicting tendencies were thus fighting for the decision, which depended on the unstable Kaiser. Hence the contradictory phenomena just before the outbreak of war: On the one hand, the pressure on Austria in the direction of peace, and at the same time the precipitation of mobilization and declarations of war.

Some have seen in these contradictions a deliberate and cunning perfidy. I see in it only a result of the confusion, which entered Germany's governing circles after England's warning, and was still further increased by Austria's attitude. The influence of this precious ally must not be forgotten. A few illustrations may be given here.

The nearer the threat of war, the more important it was to win over Italy. As late as July 29th the Imperial Chancellor was writing to Jagow:

> "Is it not necessary to send yet another telegram to Vienna, in which we state in sharp language that we consider the way in which Vienna is handling the question of compensation with Rome absolutely unsatisfactory, and the responsibility for the attitude of Italy in the event of war falls on Austria alone? If, on the eve of a possible European conflagration, Vienna threatens to burst the Triple Alliance in this way, the whole alliance will begin to totter. Vienna's declaration that she will act properly towards Italy in the event of a lasting occupation of Serbian territory, is, moreover, in

contradiction to her assurances given in St. Petersburg regarding her territorial disinterestedness. The declarations made in Rome are certainly known in St. Petersburg. We cannot support as allies a policy which is two-faced.

"I regard this as necessary. Otherwise we cannot further mediate in St. Petersburg, and will be simply towed in the wake of Vienna. This I do not desire, even at the risk of being accused of lukewarmness.

"If you have no objections, I ask you to submit a telegram in this sense."

But urgent warnings of this nature had no effect on the obstinate diplomats of Vienna. Berchtold persisted in giving evasive answers, and he was surpassed in this by the fanatical Italophobe, Herr von Merey, whom the political wisdom of Austria had made Ambassador to Rome. On July 29th he wrote to Vienna, saying that the more conciliatory Austria was, the more immoderate and covetous would Italy become, and on July 31st he complained that, contrary to his advice, Count Berchtold had already gone three-quarters of the way to meet Italy on the question of compensation, under pressure from the German Government, which was, of course, an exaggeration, for it had been impossible to drag more than vague hints out of Berchtold. Jagow had rather to complain of Merey that he did not carry out the instructions given him on the question of compensation.

Count Berchtold himself reported in the Ministerial Council of July 31st, that he had

"Hitherto commissioned the Imperial and Royal

> Ambassador in Rome to reply on questions of compensation with vague phrases, and at the same time constantly to emphasize that the idea of territorial acquisitions was remote from the Vienna Cabinet. If the Monarchy, however, should be forced to undertake an occupation which was not merely temporary, there would still be time to approach the question of compensation." (Gooss, page 305.)

With this dilatory policy, which was merely befooling her, Italy was of course lost to the Central Powers.

The escape from the danger of war had, however, become a far more important object than the wooing of allies.

In view of the mobilizations, this danger had become so great that the quickest way to escape it ought to have been chosen first. The Imperial Chancellor could not decide on this, presumably in face of the disinclination of his master for any mediation *à quatre* and the Hague Tribunal.

On the evening of July 29th that celebrated telegram from the Tsar arrived, which later aroused so much stir, as in the German White Book, issued at the beginning of the war, which contained all the Tsar's telegrams, this particular one was " forgotten." It reads :

> " Thanks for your conciliatory and friendly telegram. In contrast to it, the official communication made to-day by your Ambassador to my Minister was couched in quite a different tone. I beg you to explain the difference. **[Now then ! !—W.]** It would be well to submit the Austro-Serbian problem

to the Hague Conference. **[!—W.]** I rely on your wisdom and friendship.

"Your loving,

"NICKY."

[Thanks likewise.—W.]

Thereupon Bethmann-Hollweg at once telegraphed to the Ambassador in St. Petersburg :

> "I beg your Excellency to explain the alleged discrepancy between your language and His Majesty's telegrams at once in a conversation with M. Sasonow. The idea of the Hague Conference will of course be quite out of the question in this case."

In view of this aversion from the direct way to peace, there remained only the indirect way, that of pressure on the heavy-handed and narrow-minded Austrians, in whom war had already let loose all their military instincts.

In the night of July 29th–30th Berlin was no longer endeavouring so anxiously, as on the 28th, to avoid the impression "as if we wished to hold back Austria" (*Cf*. page 257).

On July 30th, at 3 a.m., the Ambassador in Vienna was given Lichnowsky's telegram with Grey's warning and the following amplifications :

> "If Austria refuses any intervention, we are thus faced with a conflagration, in which England would go against us, and, according to all indications, Italy and Rumania not with us, and we two would have to face four Great Powers. The heavy end of the fighting would, through England's hostility,

fall to Germany. Austria's political prestige, the honour of her arms as well as her legitimate demands on Serbia, could be amply preserved by the occupation of Belgrade or other places. By the humiliation of Serbia, she would, as against Russia, strengthen her position in the Balkans. Under these circumstances we must urgently and earnestly submit to the consideration of the Vienna Cabinet that it should accept mediation under the honourable conditions specified. The responsibility for the consequences which will otherwise result would be uncommonly serious for Austria and for ourselves."

In still stronger language is the conclusion of the telegram sent by the Imperial Chancellor to the Ambassador in Vienna at the same hour—2.55 a.m. on July 30th—communicating a report from St. Petersburg :

"We cannot demand that Austria should negotiate with Serbia, with whom she is in a state of war. But the refusal of any interchange of opinion with St. Petersburg would be a grave error, as it would simply provoke the military intervention of foreign countries, to avoid which is Austria's first interest."

The telegram continued :

"We are, it is true, ready to fulfil the obligations of our alliance, but we must decline to allow Vienna to drag us wantonly, and in disregard of our counsels, into a world-conflagration. In the Italian question

> also, Vienna seems to pay no attention to our advice.
>
> " Please speak plainly to Count Berchtold at once with all emphasis and great seriousness."

To this German pressure Austria offered a passive resistance. This at last brought Bethmann-Hollweg to desperation. On July 30th, at 9 p.m., he sent a telegram (No. 200) to Tschirschky :

> " If Vienna, as is to be assumed from the telephone conversation of your Excellency with Herr von Stumm, refuses any intervention, in particular Grey's proposals, it is hardly possible any longer to shift the guilt of the European conflagration, which is breaking out, on to Russia. His Majesty has, at the Tsar's request, undertaken intervention in Vienna, because he could not refuse to do so without arousing the irrefutable suspicion that we want the war. The success of this intervention is, however, rendered difficult by the fact that Russia has mobilized against Austria. We have mentioned this to-day to England, adding that we have already raised in a friendly way in St. Petersburg and Paris the question of stopping Russian and French military measures, and could only take a new step in this direction through an Ultimatum, which would mean war. We have therefore suggested to Sir Edward Grey that he should, for his part, work earnestly in Paris and St. Petersburg in this sense, and have just received his assurance to that effect through Lichnowsky. If England's efforts succeed while Vienna refuses everything, Vienna will show that she wants a war at all costs,

in which we will be involved, while Russia remains free from blame. The result is a quite untenable situation for us as regards our own nation. We can therefore only urgently recommend Austria to accept Grey's proposal, which guarantees her position in every respect.

"Your Excellency will at once communicate most emphatically with Count Berchtold in this sense, and, if possible, also with Count Tisza."

Even with this telegram it is possible to be in doubt whether Bethmann-Hollweg was more concerned with maintaining peace or shifting the responsibility for the war on to Russia. But the pressure on Vienna was there, and it ought in the end to have worked for peace.

Austria, however, met this pressure with a resistance as stubborn as it was treacherous, for she did not hesitate to deceive her German ally, as she did the rest of the world, by giving way in appearance while in reality she did nothing serious.

In the Vienna Ministerial Council of July 31st, Count Berchtold reported:

> "His Majesty has approved the proposal that the Vienna Cabinet, while carefully avoiding the meritorious acceptance of the English proposal, should, however, show complaisance in the form of its reply, and in this way meet the desire of the German Chancellor, not to offend the (English) Government."

The Count added:

> "If the matter now ended with a gain of prestige only, it would, in the opinion of the President

(Berchtold), have been undertaken quite in vain. The Monarchy would gain nothing from a mere occupation of Belgrade, even if Russia were to give her consent to it."

Berchtold gave his opinion, which was to reply to the English proposal in a very courteous form, but to lay down conditions, the refusal of which he could foresee, and to avoid going into the "merits" (i.e., the matter itself, if we translate the barbarous Austrian Parliamentary jargon into German).

Tisza agreed completely with Berchtold. He was likewise of the opinion

> "That it would be fatal to go into the 'merits' (i.e., the substance) of the English proposal. The military operations against Serbia had in any case to take their course. It was doubtful, however, whether it was necessary to make the new demands on Serbia known to the Powers so early as this, and he would propose to answer the English suggestion by saying that the Monarchy was ready to meet it in principle, but only on condition that the operations against Serbia were continued and the Russian mobilization stopped."

This practical mockery of the peace proposal met with the unanimous approval of this precious Ministerial Council.

That the German Government has been also held responsible for this perfidious policy of Austria, which caused the breakdown of all attempts at mediation, need not surprise us, in view of their close co-operation

with their ally, and their initial support of the sabotage of peace. They are, however, guiltless of this final sin, which made war inevitable. Their debit account is heavy enough without that.

After the 29th they sought to preserve peace. The first obstacle that they found was, we have seen, the Austrian Government.

But they found another, more powerful and nearer at hand.

The last message of the Chancellor to Tschirschky, the demand that Austria should be pressed to yield, of which we have already spoken, was not delivered. On July 30th, at 9 p.m., the message was sent off, and at 11.20 a second was hurried after it, saying:

> "Please do not carry out instructions No. 200 for the present."

What had happened in the meanwhile? The answer is given in the following telegram of the Chancellor to the Ambassador in Vienna:

> "I have suspended the execution of instructions No. 200, because the General Staff has just informed me that military preparations by our neighbours in the East force us to a more rapid decision if we are not to expose ourselves to be taken by surprise. The General Staff urgently wishes to be definitely informed with as little delay as possible regarding decisions in Vienna, especially of a military nature. Please make inquiries at once, so that we may receive an answer to-morrow."

This telegram also was not sent, but replaced by another, in which the suspension of the instructions was

explained by the arrival of a telegram from the King of England. But it is not to be doubted that the first explanation was the true one. They were probably afraid to acknowledge such an interference of the General Staff with foreign policy. With it a new factor comes into the foreground, a factor which is decisive for the outbreak of the war.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MOBILIZATIONS

FROM the very beginning of the crisis there had been a certain distrust in most Governments, not only of Austria, but also of Germany, in spite of the vigorous assurance of Berlin that they were as surprised as the rest of the world by the Vienna Ultimatum.

The torpedoing of all attempts at intervention by Austria and Germany up to July 29th, which was then continued by Austria, now in opposition to Germany, which, however, did not show openly—all this made the Central Powers' love of peace seem more and more doubtful and strengthened in the Entente more and more the fear that they wanted a general conflagration.

On July 30th only a few foreign diplomats still believed that Germany was seriously endeavouring to mediate. Among them was the Belgian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, M. de l'Escaille, who reported on July 30th:

> "The only incontestable fact is that Germany has endeavoured, here as well as in Vienna, to find some means to avert a general conflict; that she has encountered, on the one hand, the firm resolution of the Vienna Cabinet not to yield a step, and, on the other, the distrust of the St. Petersburg

Cabinet for Austria-Hungary's assurances that she is thinking only of chastising and not of occupying Serbia."

This dispatch fell into the hands of the German Government on its way through Germany, and they hastened to publish it, because it showed, they said, that Germany had worked with the greatest devotion for peace. The German Government later published numerous other documents of Belgian diplomats from the decade before the war, all of which spoke very favourably of Germany's love of peace. What they prove is one thing, namely, that it was particularly among Belgian diplomats that the trust in German policy was very strong.

It strikes one as all the more remarkable that the German Government published at the same time as these documents, others which were intended to prove that Belgium, long before the war, had entered into a conspiracy with England and France against Germany.

As to the distrust shown by the St. Petersburg Cabinet —mentioned by de l'Escaille—towards Vienna's assurances that she would not harm Serbia's integrity, this mistrust was not limited to St. Petersburg.

On July 29th Bethmann-Hollweg wrote to Tschirschky in Vienna:

"These utterances of Austrian diplomats no longer bear the character of private statements, but must appear as the reflex of wishes and aspirations. I regard the attitude of the Austrian Government and its varying procedure towards the different Governments with increasing misgiving. In St. Petersburg she declares her disinterestedness as

regards territory, and leaves us quite in the dark regarding her programme. She feeds Rome with meaningless phrases about the question of compensation ; in London Count Mensdorff presents parts of Serbia to Bulgaria and Albania, and contradicts the solemn promises of Vienna in St. Petersburg. From these contradictions I must make the inference that the disavowal of Count Hoyos, given in telegram No. 83, was intended for the gallery. And that the Vienna Government is busy with plans which they consider advisable to conceal from us, in order to secure in all cases German assistance, and not to expose themselves to a possible refusal by open announcement.

"The above remarks are intended in the first place for your Excellency's information. I request you only to point out to Count Berchtold that he should avoid any suspicion being felt towards the declarations made by him to the Powers regarding Serbia's integrity."

In the meanwhile Bethmann-Hollweg himself had already begun to arouse considerable mistrust. The view became more and more general that Germany wanted war, and thus one reached the fatal stage where everyone prepared for war—preparations which could be made in secret at first, but at a certain stage had to take the form of open mobilization.

The dangers of this stage had been foreseen by the German statesmen themselves. In the much-discussed Report of the Bavarian Embassy of July 18th we read :

"A mobilization of German troops is to be avoided, and we shall work, through our military

departments also, to prevent Austria mobilizing her whole army, and especially the troops stationed in Galicia, in order not to cause a counter-mobilization by Russia automatically, which would then force us and France to similar measures, and would thus conjure up a European war."

Unfortunately Eisner omitted this passage. It is intended to be evidence of Germany's love of peace. It certainly says that Germany did not want a European war at any price, but only the Serbian war; it says something else, however, namely, that if Austria mobilized, this must "automatically" produce Russian mobilization, which would then conjure up a European war.

This "automatically" may be taken to heart by those who say that Russia mobilized quite without reason, and thus showed that she wanted war.

One to whom it was a question of peace in all circumstances ought not, of course, to have allowed a declaration of war on Serbia. Once this fateful step had been taken, an atmosphere of unrest was created which produced general mobilization as a result. If it was desired to avoid this, then at the very least they ought to have kept within the framework of the programme developed in the Bavarian Report: Austria should have been prevented from mobilizing in a way which would disturb Russia.

This they omitted to do. The Austrian mobilization was fairly well concealed, but Bethmann-Hollweg confessed even in his war speeches on August 4th, when he talked of the Russian mobilization, and declared it not to be justified:

> "Austria-Hungary had only mobilized its army corps which were immediately directed against Serbia, and in the north only two army corps, and far from the Russian frontier."

As early as July 25th Austria had begun the mobilization of eight army corps, which must "automatically" produce the Russian mobilization, as the German Government well knew.

And it must also have known that the partial mobilization, with which they began equally automatically, would produce a general mobilization. It took place in Austria and Russia almost at the same time—on July 31st. The Russians asserted that Austria preceded them in this step. The French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Paléologue, reported on July 31st:

> "In consequence of the general mobilization by Austria and the measures for mobilization which have been taken by Germany for the past six days secretly but uninterruptedly, the order for the general mobilization of the Russian Army has been issued."

On August 1st England and France then mobilized, exactly as the Bavarian Report had foretold.

Even in German Government circles the Russian mobilization was explained as not due to bellicose intentions on the part of the Russian Government. On July 30th the German military plenipotentiary in St. Petersburg telegraphed:

> "I have an impression that they have mobilized here out of anxiety for coming events, without aggressive intentions."

Even after the general Russian mobilization of July 31st Bethmann wrote to Lichnowsky in London :

> " I do not consider it impossible that the Russian mobilization may be traced to the fact that rumours current here yesterday to the effect that we have mobilized—absolutely false and at once officially denied—were reported as fact to St. Petersburg."

But even though mobilizations had been for defensive purposes only, they enormously increased the general tension.

The danger of the situation thus grew tremendously. Besides the diplomats, the General Staff officers now had a word to say, at the very time that the " civilian " Chancellor completed his swing round towards peace. To the General Staff officer the task was not to prevent the war, which he already considered inevitable, but rather to win the war. The prospects of victory, however, were all the greater the more rapidly one struck and the less time allowed the enemy to gather strength. Thus the attempts of the Chancellor to keep the peace only began at a point where his earlier war policy had already brought to the forefront the greatest driving force towards war.

By July 29th we have proofs of the intervention of the German General Staff in politics. On this day they sent to the Foreign Office a Memorandum, not on the military but on the political situation, which it was not their office to elucidate for the Imperial Chancellor.

The Report began with the following observations :

> " It is beyond question that no State in Europe would regard the conflict between Austria and Serbia as other than a subject of general human

> interest if there were not involved in it the danger of a universal political complication, which now already threatens to unchain a world-war. For over five years Serbia has been the cause of a tension in Europe which weighs upon the political and economic life of the nations with a pressure which is really becoming unbearable. With a forbearance almost amounting to weakness, Austria has hitherto endured the constant provocations and the political agitation directed against its constitution by a people who have gone from the murder of a king in their own country to the murder of a prince in a neighbouring land. Only after the last ghastly crime has she resorted to extreme means to burn out with glowing iron a cancer which continually threatened to poison the body of Europe. One would have thought that the whole of Europe ought to have been grateful to her. The whole of Europe would have breathed freely if its mischief-maker had been suitably chastised, and peace and order thus restored in the Balkans. But Russia placed herself on the side of the criminal country. It was only then that the Austro-Serbian affair became the thunder-cloud which threatened at any moment to break over Europe."

And so on. Such were the political lessons given by the General Staff to the Imperial Chancellor, and received by him most submissively. We need not waste words on the General Staff's conception of history. Let us only point out that the German General Staff made the murder of the Serbian king an act of the Serbian *people*. They had already forgotten that it was *their colleagues* (the military) who applied this process.

The Memorandum then points out that Russia had declared she wished to mobilize. Austria would thus be forced to mobilize, not only against Serbia but also against Russia. An encounter between the two thus became inevitable.

> "This, however, is the *casus fœderis* for Germany. Only a miracle can now prevent war.
>
> "Germany does not wish to bring about this terrible war. But the German Government knows that it would be fatally violating the deep-rooted feelings of fidelity to the alliance, one of the finest traits of German sentiment, and placing itself in opposition to all the feelings of its people, if it were not willing to come to the help of their ally at a moment which might be decisive for the latter's existence."

Germany, therefore, does not want to "bring about this terrible war," but "one of the finest traits of German sentiment," which the General Staff so brilliantly represented, forces it to do so—namely, fidelity to the conspiracy of July 5th, which is also "one of the finest traits of German sentiment."

After this appeal to German sentiment, however, the General Staff becomes quite unsentimental:

> "According to the reports to hand, France also appears to be taking preparatory measures for eventual mobilization. It is obvious that Russia and France are going hand in hand with their measures.
>
> "If the conflict between Russia and Austria is inevitable, Germany will therefore mobilize, and be prepared to enter into a war on two fronts.

> "For the military measures intended by us, if the case arises, it is of the greatest importance to receive definite information as speedily as possible, whether Russia and France intend to let matters go as far as a war with Germany. The further the progress made by the preparations of our neighbours, the more quickly they will be able to complete their mobilization. The military situation is thus becoming daily more unfavourable, and may, if our prospective opponents continue to prepare in all quietness, lead to fatal consequences for us."

Look at this language! The General Staff does not, for example, inform the Government that it has made all preparations to mobilize, as soon as it is ordered to do so, but commands without more ado: Germany will mobilize as soon as the conflict between Austria and Russia is inevitable. At the same time, it states with equal definiteness that this conflict is only now to be prevented by a miracle.

But according to the principles of the German General Staff, mobilization means war. The General Staff thus already announces a "war on two fronts," and demands to be let slip as quickly as possible, as the "military situation is daily becoming more unfavourable."

This is the meaning of this proclamation of the General Staff to the Imperial Chancellor. With it the central military organization raises the claim to take the decision of questions of foreign policy into its own hands, and to hasten on a warlike solution, even at the very moment when the civil authority is preparing to yield so far as to take a step, although a small one, towards peace.

The Imperial Chancellor, it is true, did not abdicate without a struggle.

While the war was still on we were told of this, among other things, by a pamphlet, whose author concealed himself under the pseudonym, "Junius alter," and who held the views of the war-party. There it is said :

> "Regarding the general activity of the Chancellor immediately before the outbreak of war, one gets, as a general impression, the fact that his endeavour up to the last hour—regardless of the military consequences—was directed towards preventing at any price the outbreak of this war, which had long become inevitable. In vain did Chiefs of the General Staff, War Ministers and Admiralty authorities, press for the order to mobilize : they succeeded, it is true, in half convincing the Kaiser on Thursday (July 30th) of the irrefutable necessity of this measure, so that in the afternoon Berlin police organs and the *Lokal-Anzeiger* already announced mobilization. But the intervention of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg succeeded in withdrawing the decisive and saving [!—K.] order. Still he held fast and unwavering to his hope that with English help he must succeed in bringing about an agreement between Vienna and St. Petersburg, and again two precious days were lost, which have cost us not only a part of Alsace, but also rivers of blood. In the same way, August 1st would have passed unused, if the highest military authorities had not on that day finally declared that if the order to mobilize were further delayed, they would be no longer able to bear the heavy responsibility

> resting on them. . . . Even after mobilization had taken place, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg made a last attempt to get the order cancelled, but it was fortunately too late; the military authorities, who had more political insight in their little fingers, had prevailed at the twelfth hour."

The accusations (!) of Herr "Junius alter" confirm the report of July 30th of the French Ambassador in Berlin. M. Cambon says:

> "One of the Ambassadors with whom I am on the most intimate terms saw Herr Zimmermann at two o'clock. According to the Under-Secretary, the military authorities were very eager for mobilization to be ordered, as every delay by Germany lost her some of her advantages. But so far the pressure of the General Staff, who see war in mobilization, has been successfully resisted. . . . I have, moreover, the best reasons for assuming that all the measures for mobilization, which can be carried out before the general order for mobilization is published, have been taken here, where they would like us to proclaim mobilization first, in order to shift the responsibility on to us."

Bethmann-Hollweg did not fight alone against the premature proclamation of mobilization, that is, according to German ideas, of war. By his side fought other members of the Foreign Office, who knew very well under what unfavourable international conditions Germany was entering the war, and who did not want to see the thin thread of peace, which had only been spun at the last minute, prematurely broken.

Thus the Belgian Baron Beyens reported to Brussels from Berlin on August 1st :

> "About 6 p.m. [should rather be 5.—K.] no answer had arrived from St. Petersburg to the Ultimatum of the Imperial Government. Herren von Jagow and Zimmermann went to the Chancellor and to the Kaiser to get the order for general mobilization held back to-day. But they met the unswerving resistance of the War Minister and the heads of the Army, who laid before the Kaiser the ruinous consequences of a delay of twenty-four hours. The order was at once given."

In striking contrast to these reports is the version given by Tirpitz in his "Memoirs." According to him, Bethmann-Hollweg, on the last day, had appealed most vigorously for mobilization and, in opposition to Moltke, had insisted that a declaration of war at once take place on the mobilization.

These contradictions still require explanation. But one thing is certain : the perplexity in Government circles, which began on July 29th, rapidly increased from day to day. And so did the antagonisms among themselves ! Bethmann was no longer master of the spirits he had summoned. He did not himself know how right he was when he said in the Prussian Ministerial Council of July 30th : "Control is lost and the stone is set rolling."

CHAPTER XVII

THE DECLARATION OF WAR ON RUSSIA

THE PREPARATION FOR THE DECLARATION OF WAR

THE general perplexity was clearly seen in the declaration of war on Russia. The latter had ordered general mobilization at the same time as Austria, on the morning of July 31st. Both had stated it was only a measure of precaution and did not yet mean war. Negotiations were not thereby to be broken off.

For example, the Russian Ambassador in Vienna reported to St. Petersburg on July 31st:

> "In spite of the general mobilization, I am continuing the exchange of views with Count Berchtold and his assistants."

That Germany should mobilize in her turn after the Russian mobilization was quite intelligible. Every one was then mobilizing—even Holland. If Germany had regarded mobilization simply as a precautionary measure, as did all other nations—even France—there would be nothing to condemn in this step.

Schön, the German Ambassador in Paris, reported to Berlin on August 1st:

> "The Premier told me that the mobilization just ordered here does not at all imply aggressive inten-

> tions, and this is emphasized in the proclamations. There is, he said, still room to continue the negotiations on the basis of Sir E. Grey's proposal, to which France had agreed, and which it is warmly championing.
>
> "Care has been taken to prevent encounters on the frontier by leaving a zone of ten kilometres between the French troops and the border. He could not give up hope of peace."

If Germany had accompanied her mobilization with similar assurances, negotiations could have really gone on and finally ended peacefully. Had not Russia and Austria mobilized in 1913 without coming to blows? We have seen that one of the reasons for William considering the war against Serbia necessary, although the Serbian answer had removed every ground for it, lay in the fact that Austria was now mobilizing for the third time. If this happened again without the "army"—i.e., the officers—seeing their "military honour" satisfied it would have evil consequences.

On August 1st Tirpitz considered the declaration of war an error. Moltke placed "no value" on it that day, as Tirpitz observes.

Mobilization therefore did not necessarily mean war. Demobilization could still follow it at the last moment without this bloody result, if people came to an understanding meanwhile.

In the message to St. Petersburg of July 31st, in which Bethmann held out the prospect of Germany's mobilizing, he complained that Russia was mobilizing, although negotiations were still going on. Austria, however, in spite of the negotiations, had not only mobilized, but declared war on Serbia and bombarded

Belgrade. If this did not make negotiations impossible, mere mobilization by Russia need not have been taken so much to heart.

But this was not the only point in which the Imperial Chancellor saw only the mote in the eye of Russia, and not the beam in the eye of Austria. He demanded that Russia should at once cease any military measures, not only against Germany, but also against Austria, without proposing the same for Austria. If he wanted Russia to refuse his demand, this was exactly the way to formulate it.

The message of the Chancellor appears no less peculiar, however, if it is compared with the one sent off at the same time to Schön for the French Government. We give the two in parallel columns:

Note to Russia.	Note to France.
In spite of the fact that negotiations are still going on, and although we ourselves have taken no steps of any kind to mobilize up to the present hour, Russia has mobilized her whole army and fleet, that is against us also. By these Russian measures we have been forced for the security of the Empire to announce a state of threatening "danger" (or imminence) of war (Kriegsgefahr), which does not yet mean mobilization. Mobi-	*In spite of the fact that our negotiations are still going on, and although we ourselves have taken no steps of any kind to mobilize, Russia has ordered the mobilization of her whole army and fleet, that is against us also. We have therefore announced a state of threatening "danger of war," which must be followed by mobilization, if Russia does not within twelve hours cease all war measures against us and Austria. Mobiliza-*

lization, however, must follow if Russia does not within twelve hours cease every war measure against us and Austria, and give a definite declaration on the point. Please communicate this at once to M. Sasonow and wire the hour of communication.

tion inevitably means war. Please ask the French Government if they will remain neutral in a Russo-German war. Answer must be given within eighteen hours. Telegraph at once the hour of asking the question. Greatest speed most necessary.

We see the two messages agree almost word for word, apart from the special conclusion for France, except for one sentence: France is informed that mobilization inevitably means war. In the text intended for Russia, this decisive sentence, which makes the communication an Ultimatum, is wanting.

Why was this? The omission can be explained in two very different ways: first, from the desire of the General Staff not to arouse Russia prematurely, to keep her still in the belief that in spite of the mobilization, negotiations could be continued, and thus prevent her hastening mobilization unduly. The omission might, however, have arisen from the desire of the Chancellor not to break down all bridges, in spite of mobilization.

As a matter of fact, the communication of the German Government was not yet regarded in St. Petersburg as an Ultimatum.

At twelve midnight Pourtalès handed M. Sasonow the Chancellor's message.

The Tsar answered it on the next day, August 1st, at 2 p.m., in a telegram to William:

"I have received your telegram. I understand

> that you are proceeding to mobilize, but I should like to receive from you the same guarantee as I have given you, namely, that these measures do not mean war and that we shall continue to negotiate for the welfare of both our countries and the general peace which is so dear to our hearts. Our long, tried friendship must succeed with God's help in preventing bloodshed. I anxiously await your answer, full of confidence."

The unsuspecting "Nicky" never dreamed that his long, tried friend "Willy" had by this time already sent the declaration of war to him and thus opened the war.

THE REASON FOR THE DECLARATION OF WAR

William had been in a tremendous hurry about it, almost as quick as the Austrians on July 25th against the Serbians.

At 12 midnight the period ended at the expiry of which, according to the Chancellor's announcement, Germany would mobilize, if Russia did not at once demobilize on all fronts, while Austria went on with her general mobilization and the war against Serbia continued.

And by 1 p.m., not only was mobilization ordered, but the declaration of war sent to St. Petersburg.

The German White Book, which gives all documents in German, as a rule, even those originally in foreign languages—e.g., the telegrams interchanged between the Kaiser and the Tsar—publishes the declaration of war

on Russia, so momentous for every German, shamefacedly only in French.

Translated it reads :

> " From the very beginning of the crisis the Imperial Government had endeavoured to bring about a peaceful solution. Obeying a wish expressed to him by H.M. the Tsar of Russia, H.M. the German Emperor had undertaken, in agreement with England, to act as mediator between the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg, when Russia, without awaiting the result, proceeded to mobilize all her forces by land and sea.
>
> " In consequence of these threatening measures, justified by no military preparations on the German side, the German Government found itself faced with a great and imminent threatening danger. If the Imperial Government had neglected to meet this danger, it would have endangered the safety and even the existence of Germany. In consequence, the German Government found itself forced to turn to the Government of H.M. the Tsar of all the Russias, with the pressing demand that the above-mentioned military measures should cease. As Russia has refused to meet this demand (has not considered it necessary to answer our demand), and by this refusal (this attitude) has shown that her action is directed against Germany, I have the honour, under instructions from my Government, to inform Your Excellency as follows :
>
> " His Majesty, my illustrious Sovereign, accepts the challenge in name of the Empire, and considers himself in a state of war with Russia."

This declaration of war was accompanied by the following telegram to Pourtalès :

> " If the Russian Government does not give a satisfactory reply to our demand, Your Excellency will hand to them the following declaration to-day at 5 p.m. (Central European time)."

In the declaration itself a sentence was given in two different versions, of which the one which was in keeping with Sasonow's answer was to be chosen.

What had been going on in St. Petersburg in the meanwhile ?

Pourtalès had communicated in St. Petersburg the Chancellor's announcement that Germany must mobilize if Russia did not demobilize against Germany and Austria. He telegraphed on August 1st, at 1 a.m., from St. Petersburg, regarding this :

> " I have just carried out your instructions at midnight. M. Sasonow again pointed to the technical impossibility of stopping military measures, and endeavoured once more to convince me that we were exaggerating the importance of the Russian mobilization, which was not to be compared with ours. He urgently begged me to call Your Excellency's attention to the fact that the pledge given on the Tsar's word of honour in to-day's telegram from H.M. the Emperor Nicholas to H.M. the Emperor and King, ought to satisfy us regarding Russia's intentions, and pointed out that the Tsar did not by any means bind himself in all eventualities to refrain from warlike acts, but only so long as there was still a prospect of settling Austro-

> Russian differences regarding Serbia. I put the question directly to the Minister whether he could guarantee me that, if an agreement with Austria was not reached, Russia would be willing to maintain peace. The Minister could not give me an affirmative answer to this question. In this case, I replied, we could not be blamed if we were not inclined to allow Russia a further advantage in mobilization."

This is all. In the conversation also there is not even the slightest hint of the principle so sharply emphasized to France, that Germany's mobilization would be synonymous to a declaration of war. And now for the deciding telegram, from Pourtalès, which never reached its addressee, the Foreign Office in Berlin, dispatched from St. Petersburg on August 1st, at 8 p.m.:

> "After deciphering, at seven o'clock Russian time (six Central European), I asked M. Sasonow three times in succession whether he could give me the declaration demanded in telegram No. 153, regarding the cessation of military measures against us and Austria. After he had three times answered in the negative, I handed him the Note as commanded."

Herr von Pourtalès had been in such haste to deliver the Note, that he did not even notice that it contained a two-fold version of Germany's reason for declaring war. Both versions were given to the Russian Government, an incident probably unique in the history of declarations of war.

In the meanwhile, the Chancellor must have become somewhat uneasy about this method of letting loose

war. Even the composition of the last sentence of the proclamation of war had caused difficulties.

A proposal had been made to say :

> "*S.M. l'Empereur, mon auguste souverain, au nom de l'Empire déclare accepter la guerre qui Lui est octroyée*" ("H.M. the Kaiser, my illustrious Sovereign, announces, in the name of the Empire, his acceptance of the war which is forced upon him").

This was bad French, for it is only in German that *octroyieren* means to "force upon," while in French *octroyer* means to "grant" or "vouchsafe."

Perhaps for this reason *octroyée* was replaced by *forcée sur lui*, which says "forced upon" in better French.

But the difficulty lay not in the words, but in the substance. It was felt that after all that had happened, it was impossible to describe the war as forced upon Germany. Only later, when the necessary "hurra" atmosphere had been created, the courage was found to do so. The quaint form given above was therefore chosen :

> "*S.M. l'Empereur, mon auguste souverain, au nom de l'Empire relève de défi et Se considère en état de guerre avec la Russie.*"

The "forcing of the war upon him" became a simple "challenge to war," which the Kaiser regarded as having broken out. In this feeble and distorted form, the declaration of the most terrible of all wars, which could only have been justified by the most cogent of motives, was couched. But such could not be raised,

although since the beginning of the crisis it had been Bethmann's most urgent care to put Russia in the wrong, and shift to her the whole responsibility for the coming war.

When the Tsar's telegram came, which recognized Germany's right to mobilize, but contested the necessity that mobilization should mean war, their declaration of war must have appeared doubly unjustified; otherwise we could not understand why they subsequently made the effort once more to prevent the proclamation of mobilization which had not yet been issued. In this they did not succeed; it was ordered at five o'clock. The "civilian Chancellor" was not yet at ease. We have already quoted "Junius alter" to the effect that "after mobilization had taken place, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg made one last effort to obtain the withdrawal of the order; but it was fortunately too late."

This no doubt refers to the following. Although at 1 p.m. the declaration of war had already been sent to St. Petersburg, the Chancellor, nevertheless, at 9.45 p.m. laid before the Kaiser a telegram to the Tsar, in which a way to negotiations was again opened up, and "Willy," as William still signed himself, said:

> "An immediate clear and unmistakable answer from your (Nicky's) Government is the only way to avoid endless misery. I must most earnestly ask you to give your troops without delay the order, under no circumstances to commit even the slightest violation of our frontiers."

This telegram, handed in at the General Telegraph Office at 10.30 p.m., nine hours after the dispatch of the declaration of war, is probably one of the most

peculiar episodes in the horrible comedy of errors and confusion on August 1st. It also aroused the liveliest astonishment in St. Petersburg. Pourtalès reported on it, while still there, three hours before his departure for Stockholm :

> " M. Sasonow has just asked me over the telephone how the following is to be explained : H.M. the Tsar of Russia a few hours ago received a telegram from our most gracious master, dated 10.45 p.m., and containing in its concluding sentence, the request that the Tsar Nicholas should command his troops in no case to cross the frontier. M. Sasonow asks how I can explain such a request after handing over the Note last night [the declaration of war.—K.]. I replied that I could find no other explanation than that probably the telegram of my Emperor had really been dispatched the day before at 10.45 p.m."

Indeed, the telegram of August 1st at 10.45 p.m. was inexplicable. The only right explanation naturally did not enter the German Ambassador's head, and if it had struck him, he would have been careful not to make it public—namely, the explanation : his " most gracious master " and his advisers had all lost their heads.

THE OPENING OF THE WAR BY RUSSIA

As it was no longer possible for William and those around him to undo the misfortune, which they had brought about—for, as the German patriot " Junius

alter" triumphantly observes: "It was fortunately too late"—and as the cause they had given themselves for the declaration must have seemed utterly insufficient, they looked round for a pretext to make Russia the originator of the world-war. This piece of jugglery was performed in the Memorandum laid before the Reichstag on August 3rd. In this document it is only, as it were, incidentally mentioned that Germany had said that if her demand for demobilization were not granted, she would consider herself "in a state of war," and then it proceeds:

> "However, before a report regarding the execution of this demand was received, Russian troops crossed our frontiers and advanced on German territory—to be exact, by the afternoon of August 1st—that is, the same afternoon as the abovementioned telegram of the Tsar was dispatched.
>
> "Thus Russia began the war against us."

Of all the astounding arguments, produced at that time by the German Foreign Office to justify the war, this is probably the most remarkable. Just think! The German Government commissions their Ambassador in St. Petersburg to declare war on Russia at 5 p.m. On the "afternoon of the same day, August 1st," Russian troops cross the German frontier; therefore, concludes the Government, Russia has begun the war, for—this happened at a time when there was as yet no report in Berlin of the declaration of war in St. Petersburg!

According to this, a declaration of war does not take effect from the moment it is issued, but only from the

moment when the party declaring war is informed that the other side has received the declaration.

Did the Russians really cross the frontier before 6 p.m.—i.e., the time at which the declaration of war was actually made in St. Petersburg? The German Memorandum wants this to be believed when it says that the violation of the frontier took place "by the afternoon."

To decide whether Russia really began the war, it would be of the utmost importance to know exactly the details of the violation of the frontier. If somewhere or other two or three Cossacks crossed the frontier of their own accord, this was not yet an incident which justified talk of a beginning of the war "by Russia." Such incidents happen in peace time.

How such incidents are treated is shown, for example, by a Note sent to Berlin by Viviani on August 2nd, protesting against violation of the frontier, said to have been committed by German troops at different parts of the French borders. The villages and troops concerned were given exactly. It did not strike Viviani to do more than offer a protest, nor to say "Germany has begun the war against France." But it seems that on August 1st, on the Russian side there was not the slightest violation of the frontier—at least, not before the declaration of war.

The German Memorandum speaks of "afternoon," and lays special stress on this indication of time, which is in striking contrast to its indefiniteness. In view of the importance of the matter, it surely would have been advisable to give the exact hour of the violation of the frontier.

That if the German frontier really was crossed by

Russian troops on August 1st, this could not really have taken place in the early afternoon, is clear from the simple fact that in the evening, at 9.45, the Chancellor placed before the Kaiser another telegram to the Tsar, in which the latter was requested to command his troops to avoid any violation of the frontier. This dispatch, as shown above, was sent off from the Foreign Office after 10 p.m. At this hour, therefore, there cannot yet have been any news of a crossing of the frontier; otherwise the telegram would have been even more superfluous than it was in any case, owing to the delivery of the declaration of war.

In reality, William received the first news of the crossing of the frontier by Russians on the morning of August 2nd, when Bethmann informed him:

> "According to a report of the General Staff (at 4 a.m. to-day), there has been an attempt to destroy the railway and an advance by two squadrons of Cossacks on Johannisburg. Thereby we are actually in a state of war."

Here at last a time and place are mentioned. And then we find that the "afternoon of August 1st," in reality, was the "morning of August 2nd." Russian hostilities began about ten hours after the delivery of the German declaration of war in St. Petersburg. This is the way "Russia began the war against us."

If, nevertheless, the German Government attributes to these warlike operations the decisive part in the outbreak of war, it only shows how little founded their declaration of war seemed to German statesmen themselves.

In the Memorandum of the German Government

of August 3rd, several times already mentioned, it is thrust as much as possible into the background. Its account is a model of misleading reporting.

It says:

> "The Imperial Ambassador in St. Petersburg delivered the message to M. Sasonow entrusted to him on July 31st, at 12 midnight.
>
> "An answer to it from the Russian Government has never reached us. Two hours after the expiry of the time-limit mentioned in this communication the Tsar telegraphed to H.M. the Kaiser. . . ."

Then comes the telegram already quoted.

A complete historical narrative ought of course to have mentioned that the declaration of war was sent to St. Petersburg before the Tsar's telegram and an hour after the expiry of the prescribed time-limit. But there is not a word said about it in this passage. Such an unimportant trifle obviously can be easily overlooked. It is really a wonder that it is copied as No. 25 in the attached papers. It could unfortunately not be completely disposed of.

After the copy of the telegram to the Tsar, which arrived after two o'clock, the Memorandum goes on:

> "*To this His Majesty replied.*"

And next William's telegram is given. But while in all the telegrams from the Kaiser to the Tsar in the Memorandum the exact hour of dispatch is given, it is lacking in this one. No reader suspects that the "To this" does not mean at once, but eight hours later—10 p.m. Everyone must believe the telegram was sent

off before five o'clock. For after copying it, the document goes on:

> "*As the time-limit allowed to Russia had expired, without a reply having been received to our question, His Majesty the Kaiser and King, on August 1st, at 5 p.m., ordered the mobilization of the whole German Army and of the Imperial Navy. The Imperial Ambassador in St. Petersburg had in the meanwhile* [! !—K.] *received instructions in case the Russian Government did not give a satisfactory reply within the prescribed period, to announce that we should consider ourselves as in a state of war after the refusal of our demand.*"

What next follows in the text of the Memorandum we have already given above.

The "in the meanwhile" in this account is really priceless—a model of precise statement of time. It is worthy of the order in which the events are presented. We have:

The Real Sequence	The Sequence in the Memorandum
1 p.m.—Dispatch of the declaration of war.	2 p.m.—The Tsar's telegram.
2 p.m.—The Tsar's telegram.	No hour given.—The Kaiser's telegram.
5 p.m.—Mobilization.	5 p.m.—Mobilization.
10 p.m.—The Kaiser's telegram to the Tsar.	No hour given.—Dispatch of the declaration of war.

The chronological confusion of the Memorandum was absolutely essential if it was to bring the reader to the

conclusion which prevailed in public life in Germany till the White Book of June, 1919, namely :

Russia began the war against us. In reality, it was otherwise. Germany began the war against Russia. The account of the beginning of the war given by the German Government turns things upside down.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DECLARATION OF WAR ON FRANCE

THE NEUTRALIZATION OF FRANCE

AFTER the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia, war between Germany and France must have followed automatically. The German plan of campaign was to dispose of France first, and then to settle with the Russians. To enable the German armies to begin their activity against France as speedily as possible, that is to say, to produce a declaration of war in the west, was the task which the General Staff laid upon the Foreign Office. With this object the latter had sent to Paris on July 31st at the same time as the announcement of mobilization which was conveyed to Russia, a note almost to the same effect, the tone of which, however, as we have seen, was much more threatening. It said definitely "Mobilization inevitably means war," and categorically demanded of the French Government that they should say whether they would remain neutral in a Russo-German war; the answer to be given within 18 hours.

The intention was obvious: by setting this question to France they wished to force her to declare at once that she was on Russia's side; war would then have been declared without more ado, and by August 2nd activity against France could have been begun.

Confiding subjects of the Kaiser have nevertheless

seen in this action of the German Government a proof of their love of peace.

Dr. David, for example, thought :

> "*The German Government undertook the attempt at least to confine the conflagration to the east. This is no small factor to their credit. It was seriously intended. There could be no doubt on this point.*" ("The Social-Democracy in the World-War," p. 80.)

A man who regarded the German Government with less confidence would probably have cherished doubts as to whether the form of the ultimatum which Germany sent to Paris in the telegram printed above with the demand that a statement on neutrality should at once be made, was that which would have been chosen by any-one who really desired her neutrality. But even the most innocent and trusting spirit must lose all doubts when he learns that this telegram to Schön had an appendix, which the German Government very wisely did not publish, but on the contrary marked "Secret." It was not their fault that this appendix nevertheless became known to the French Government, not long afterwards, when the war was in full swing. It ran :

> "If, as is not to be expected, the French Government states it will remain neutral, your Excellency will tell them that we must demand as a guarantee of their neutrality the surrender of the fortresses of Toul and Verdun, which we would occupy and restore at the conclusion of the war with Russia. The answer to the latter question must reach here by to-morrow (*August* 1.—*K.*) afternoon, at 4 p.m.
>
> "V. Bethmann-Hollweg."

That no French Government, even the most pacifist with a Jaurès at the head of it, could accede to this demand, and that the question about neutrality was not intended "to confine the conflagration to the east" but to force France to war at once, is obvious.

At 4 p.m. on August 1st they expected to have a ground for war against France, and at 5 p.m. the declaration of war was to be handed to Russia. It was thus hoped to be able to begin the war at the same time on both fronts, and the front against France seemed to the General Staff more urgent than that against Russia. On August 4th Jagow assured the Belgian Ambassador, Baron Beyens:

> "To avoid being destroyed, Germany must first destroy France and then turn against Russia."

It was therefore very upsetting that France's answer was quite an unexpected one. Viviani did not refuse neutrality, as Bethmann-Hollweg had assumed he would, nor did he promise it, so that there was no opportunity to produce the demand for the surrender of Toul and Verdun; Schön therefore had to telegraph on August 1st:

> "To my definite and repeated question whether France would remain neutral in the case of a Russo-German war, the Premier replied to me that France would do what her interest demanded."

Schön had no instructions to meet this answer. Nor was it easy for the Foreign Office to declare themselves, on the strength of it, "forced to war" and "assailed by France," which was, however, necessary if they were to create a favourable moral atmosphere for the war.

Immediately on the receipt of Schön's reply the Foreign Office set itself to evolve a declaration of war, and produced the following document, still dated Aug. 1st:

> "The German Government has from the beginning of the crisis been striving for a peaceful settlement. But while it was mediating between Vienna and St. Petersburg by desire of H.M. the Tsar of Russia and in conjunction with England, Russia mobilized her whole army and navy. The security of the German Empire has been threatened by this measure, which had not been preceded by any extraordinary military preparations in Germany. Not to meet such a danger would mean to risk the existence of the Empire. The German Government has therefore summoned the Russian Government to cease mobilizing against Germany and her allies at once. At the same time the German Government informed the Government of the French Republic of this message, and in view of the known relations of the Republic to Russia, asked for a declaration whether France were willing to remain neutral in the Russo-German war. To this the French Government has given the ambiguous and evasive answer that France will do what her interests demand. By this answer France reserves the right to take the side of our enemies, and is able at any moment to take us in the rear with her army, in the meanwhile mobilized. In this attitude Germany must see a threat, especially as, although the time limit has long expired, she has received no reply to the summons to Russia to cease mobilizing her forces, and thus a Russo-German war has broken out. Germany cannot leave it to France to choose

the time at which the threat to her Western frontier will become a reality, but being threatened from two sides must at once begin her defence.

"I am therefore commanded to inform your Excellency that: 'His Majesty the German Emperor declares in the name of the Empire that Germany announces she is in a state of war with France.'"

This declaration of war was not dispatched. The reasons for this are not recorded. They probably hesitated to follow up the insufficiently founded declaration of war on Russia with a second of similar calibre to France. With what embarrassment the declaration, just made, of war on Russia was regarded is shown even in the fact that they do not dare to mention it in the document in question, but simply talk of a "Russo-German war having broken out," as if it were some natural happening, like the eruption of a volcano, independent of all human determination. But on the validity of the declaration of war on Russia depended that on France. If Germany were attacked by Russia, then she had to protect herself from being attacked at pleasure by France. If, on the other hand, the German Government were the aggressors against Russia, they became the aggressors against France also, as soon as they declared war on the latter merely for the reason that she intended to do what her interests demanded.

To these considerations there might perhaps be added another, namely, that war might have been declared on England and Italy for the same reason as on France. The neutrality of the former countries was also not certain; they also could "at any moment fall on the rear" of the Central Powers, with their armies and fleets in the meanwhile mobilized. It would surely have been

dangerous to give this reason as sufficient ground for a declaration of war on France just at the moment when they were endeavouring, on different lines, to obtain the neutrality or the alliance of the two Powers mentioned.

In no case could it be asserted that by the French statement alone Germany was already attacked and forced to war. Yet this was what they wanted to persuade the world to believe.

But whatever reasons decided them not to send off the document, the fact that it was not sent at least shows that they became convinced that France's answer, to the effect that she would be guided by her own interests, afforded no sufficient ground for a declaration of war.

But the declaration of war was urgently required, now that the war with Russia was already in progress. In their embarrassment they finally resorted to the same means as they had taken refuge in after declaring war on Russia, to prove that the latter had broken the peace: they appealed to acts of war which had been begun by the enemy.

THE MYSTERIOUS AIRMEN

The memorandum to the German Reichstag of August 3rd, which we have already mentioned several times, was, as it states, finished at 12 noon on August 2nd. The German Ambassador handed the French Premier the declaration of war on August 3rd at 6.45 p.m. But the memorandum was already able to announce :

> "On the morning of the next day (August 2nd) France opened hostilities."

Of what nature were these ?

The declaration of war on August 3rd details them :

"French troops already crossed the German frontier yesterday at Altmünsterol, and on mountain roads in the Vosges, and are still on German territory. A French aviator, who must have flown over Belgian territory, was shot down yesterday in the attempt to destroy the railway at Wesel. The presence of several other French aeroplanes over the Eifel territory was yesterday established beyond all doubt. These also must have flown over Belgian territory. French aviators yesterday dropped bombs on the railway lines at Karlsruhe and Nürnberg. France has thus placed us in a state of war with her."

Now at last they had the long-desired state of war. France, it is true, could at the same time politely produce a list of complaints about violations of the frontier, and Bethmann-Hollweg, in his war speech on August 4th, had even to confess that they were not unjustified. The French Government did not, however, make these a cause of war; in order to prevent violations of the frontier by their troops they had even done what the German Government did not do; as early as July 30th they had issued orders that:

"Although Germany has made her defensive arrangements only a few hundreds of metres from the frontier on the whole front from Luxemburg to the Vosges and placed covering troops in their battle positions, we have withdrawn our troops ten kilometres from the frontier and forbidden them to advance nearer." (Yellow Book of 1914. No. 106.)

One may take the view of those German politicians who assumed that France took these measures not in the interests of peace, but only because she was not yet ready, that is to say, out of treachery, in order to gain time and afterwards to "fall upon the rear" of the enemy. But whoever adopts this attitude will have to grant that the French Government would have failed in their own object if they began hostilities prematurely.

For this very reason the statements in the declaration of war must be regarded with the greatest mistrust. On what information is it based?

On August 2nd at midnight the Imperial Chancellor telegraphed to London:

> "According to absolutely reliable reports France has to-day permitted the following act of aggression on us:
>
> "1. French cavalry patrols early this afternoon crossed the frontier at Altmünsterol, in Alsace.
>
> "2. A French aviator has been shot down near Wesel.
>
> "3. Two Frenchmen tried to blow up the Aachen tunnel on the Wesel railway and were shot in the act.
>
> "4. French infantry crossed the frontier in Alsace and fired shots.
>
> "Please communicate with the English Government to the above effect and earnestly point out to Sir Edward Grey into what a dangerous situation Germany is brought by these provocations, which are a breach of good faith, and that she is being driven to the most grave decisions. Your Excellency will, I hope, succeed in convincing England that Germany, after clinging to the idea of peace

to the last possible limits, is driven by her opponents into the rôle of the provoked party, who must resort to arms to preserve her existence."

On August 3rd there was then drawn up in the Foreign Office at 1.45 p.m. the following catalogue of French aggressions, reported by the General Staff:

> "1. Report from the Corps Commander of the XVth Army Corps: Violations of the frontier by the French on the evening of August 1st at Metzeral and the Schlucht pass have been established beyond doubt. German outposts were shot at. No casualties.—Sent off from Strassburg, August 2nd, 9.30 p.m.
>
> "2. Report from the General Commander of the XVth Army Corps: In the night of August 1st–2nd the frontier was crossed by French infantry opposite Markirch. The French fired first. No casualties.—Sent off from Strassburg, August 2nd, at 5.55 p.m.
>
> "3. The 50th Infantry Brigade reports from Mülhausen: August 2nd, 12.10 p.m. Enemy patrols have crossed the frontier at Altmünsterol, near Rath, but have gone back again.
>
> "4. Report from the Lines of Communication Commandant of Cologne. Sent off on August 2nd, at 11.45 p.m.: Enemy aeroplanes have been actively engaged in flying over the frontier from the direction of Treves to Junkerath, and from the Dahlheim direction to Rheydt, and on the right bank of the Rhine near Cologne. At Rheydt they signalled with red, white and green lights.
>
> "5. Telegraphic report from the Chief of Staff

of the XXIst Army Corps, August 3rd, 9.40 a.m.: Three aeroplanes and an airship (broad in front and tapering behind) were bombarded with machine guns early this morning above the railway station of Saarburg, Lorraine. The aeroplanes did not give the prescribed signals of identification.

"6. Report from the Lines of Communication Commandant in Ludwigshafen on the Rhine of August 2nd, evening: Two enemy aeroplanes reported to-day (August 2nd) at Neustadt a. d. Haardt towards 10 p.m. last night.

"7. Report from the Lines of Communication Commandant at Wesel (received in the evening of August 2nd): An enemy aeroplane shot down near Wesel."

In this compilation of August 3rd the first thing that strikes us is that there is no mention in it of blowing up the Aachen tunnel. For good reasons. Although it was based on "absolutely reliable reports" it was proved to be false the very next day. It proved to be one of the many rumours which were current in those days of excitement, but which ought not to have been accepted as correct by a serious statesman without investigation.

Even the reports of the military authorities did not always prove correct. Thus on the morning of August 3rd at 10 a.m. the Luxemburg Minister of State Eyschen telegraphed to Jagow:

"There is just being distributed in the town of Luxemburg a proclamation by the General commanding the VIIIth Army Corps, Tulff von Tscheepe, which contains the following:

> "'Since France, disregarding the neutrality of Luxemburg, as is established beyond doubt, is opening hostilities against Germany from Luxemburg soil, His Majesty has issued orders that German troops also are to enter Luxemburg.'
>
> "This is due to an error. There is absolutely not a single French soldier on Luxemburg soil, nor is there the slightest sign of a threat to its neutrality by France. On the contrary, on August 1st (Saturday evening) the rails of the permanent way were taken up on French soil at Mont Saint Martin Longwy. This shows that as late as this day there was no intention of invading Luxemburg by railway."

It was of no avail. The German generals apparently felt qualified where it suited them to "establish hostilities" by the French "beyond all doubt." The proclamation of General Tulff shows, however, "beyond all doubt," that on the German side not a few patrols, but the VIIIth Army Corps had begun hostilities against France as early as the morning of August 3rd, by His Majesty's command, by penetrating on to Luxemburg soil.

That the General was acting on his own initiative need not be assumed, although the military in those days were already becoming very independent. For example, the following Note from Count Montgelas was laid before Jagow on the afternoon of August 3rd:

> "The Commander-in-Chief in the Mark announces that in view of the violations of the frontier, authentically proved, he is forced to take the same measures against the French Embassy and the French as have already been taken against the Russian Embassy and the Russians."

The Commander-in-Chief in the Mark then considered himself qualified by reason of "violations of the frontier authentically proved" to declare war on France of his own accord, at least for Berlin. This was really too mad for Jagow. He added to the Note :

> "What sort of measures are these ? We are not yet in a state of war. Diplomats are therefore still accredited."

War was, however, not declared on the Commander-in-Chief in the Mark, for a few hours later Schön announced in Paris that Germany was at war with France.

In her declaration of war the chief weight was laid on the aviators. The alleged violations of the frontier by French airmen were at least balanced by encroachments on French territory by German troops, which were reported at the same time, and of which Viviani had already complained on August 2nd. But the aeroplanes !

Now in those days a peculiar mania had seized the masses of the people. At night they saw aeroplanes and airships everywhere above them, and heard bombs explode. The Chief of Police in Stuttgart at this time issued a warning to be calm and rational, in which he said :

> "Clouds are being taken for aeroplanes, stars for airships, and bicycle handlebars for bombs."

In spite of the inclination to believe in such circumstances every report about aeroplanes, which were, of course, even in the darkest night, at once recognized as "French military aeroplanes," the Chancellor could only quote three cases, of which one, that an "aeroplane had been sighted over the Eifel," deserves no

consideration at all, for there were then many aeroplanes in Germany, and who could have said, if they really were "sighted," that those in the Eifel were French and not German, or perhaps Belgian or Dutch that had lost their way?

But the case at Wesel?

The Chancellor reported on August 2nd:

> "A French military flying officer was shot down from the air near Wesel."

The official military report of noon on August 3rd only said vaguely:

> "An enemy machine shot down near Wesel."

Nothing about the occupant, or whether he was a civilian or an officer. But in the declaration of war it was asserted that a military airman had attempted to destroy the railway at Wesel.

Of this there is not a word in the report of the Lines of Communication Commandant at Wesel.

We have just seen what weight is to be attached to the aeroplanes sighted in the Eifel and to the attempt on Wesel. As to the South German military aviators, to whose misdeeds reference was made in the declaration of war, they have long since been branded as empty fictions.

As early as April, 1916, the municipal authorities of Nürnberg made a statement:

> "Nothing is known to the Deputy Corps Headquarters of the IIIrd Bavaria Army Corps here of the story that the stretches of railway, Nürnberg–Kissingen and Nürnberg–Ansbach, were each

bombed by enemy aeroplanes before and after the outbreak of war. All statements and newspaper reports to this effect have proved to be false."

About this the Berlin Foreign Office had had earlier information. On August 2nd, 1914, the Prussian Ambassador in Munich sent the following message to the Imperial Chancellor, which is marked as arriving in the Foreign Office on August 3rd, at 3 p.m. :

> "The military report, also circulated here by the *Süddeutsche Korrespondenzbureau*, that French aeroplanes dropped bombs to-day in the neighbourhood of Nürnberg has so far found no confirmation. Only known aeroplanes have been seen, which were obviously not military ones. The dropping of bombs is not confirmed, still less, of course, that the machines were French."

It was primarily on these bombs from aeroplanes that the justification of the German declaration of war delivered in Paris was based. It was in every respect a complete invention.

CHAPTER XIX

THE DECLARATION OF WAR ON BELGIUM

THE BREACH OF FAITH A POLITICAL BLUNDER

THERE still remained a hard nut for the Imperial Chancellor to crack, the solution of the task set him by the military: namely, the justification of the invasion of Belgium. This invasion was, like the war against France, decided upon as soon as hostilities with Russia had broken out.

In 1871, Germany had annexed Alsace-Lorraine. This was not in order to liberate the inhabitants of this territory. On the contrary, they offered a desperate resistance to being torn from France. Bismarck demanded the annexation not for national but for strategic reasons, with a view to obtaining a better strategic frontier against France, in order to be nearer Paris in a future war and to be able to threaten it more quickly than had been the case at the outbreak of war in 1870.

For the sake of this military advantage Germany had immeasurably impaired her international political position, had raised an eternal feud between herself and France, driven the latter into the arms of Russia, roused the armament rivalry and the constant danger of war in Europe, and laid the seeds of the unfavourable position in which the German Empire entered the world war in 1914.

All this was done to gain a strategic advantage which was soon to prove quite worthless. For in the age of modern science there is no natural strategic frontier the obstacles of which a wealthy and technically as well as economically developed State cannot overcome by artificial means.

The new Franco-German frontier was so formidably fortified there could be no question of a German army penetrating it quickly. And yet this appeared to be necessary for Germany in a war on two fronts, if she was to dispose of France as quickly as possible, in order to be able to turn with all her strength on Russia alone.

It did not seem possible to break through quickly on the Alsace front. The northern French frontier was therefore all the more tempting. Strangely enough, the French had only fortified the Alsace frontier very strongly. They felt themselves so secured by Belgium that they did not sufficiently fortify the northern frontier. And even in July, 1914, when the danger of war arose, and all the world was arming and concentrating troops, the French Army devoted its attention mainly to the east and not to the north.

The northern frontier was France's weak spot. If Germany made a surprise break-through at this point, she might hope to overcome all resistance in a few vigorous blows, occupy Paris, and not only Paris but also Calais, the sally-gate against England.

From the purely military point of view, then, the break-through via Belgium was certainly the obvious thing to do. It is true that the example of Alsace-Lorraine might have shown how dangerous may be the effect of militarist opportunism gaining the upper hand over a far-seeing national policy, which not only considers

the military but also the political and economic, and, above all, the moral strength and driving power of a nation.

German policy had set out to gain England's neutrality and Italy's co-operation in the decision by arms of the conflict of the Central Powers with Russia and France.

Both these ends were already questionable of attainment, but not yet decided when the war broke out. Sir Edward Grey had certainly warned Germany, but, on the other hand, he had not been able to hold out to France the absolutely certain prospect of his support, in spite of all his sympathies for the French case. He has been much blamed for this uncertainty, which some attribute to instability, and others to duplicity. His critics forget that he was a Minister in a parliamentary and democratic country, and was by no means sure of the approval of the people. Even if he found a majority in Parliament for a war against Germany, it would have been very doubtful if the mass of the working classes and of the *bourgeois* pacifists, who, it happens, are particularly numerous and influential in England, had not offered an energetic resistance to war. On the other hand, no one who knew the English to any extent could have the least doubt that the great majority of the nation would enthusiastically throw itself into the war as soon as Germany, with her powerful army and growing fleet, seized Belgium and thus directly threatened England.

Italy, however, was in the closest dependence on England. That she would take her place by the side of the Central Powers was no longer to be expected, at any rate, by the beginning of August.

On August 3rd Herr von Kleist, who had been sent

on a special mission to Rome, sent the following telegram from thence to the " Kaiser's Majesty " :

> " To-day, Monday, at 9 a.m., I delivered your Majesty's message to the King of Italy, in which immediate mobilization as well as the assistance provided for in the Treaty of Alliance was demanded.
>
> " The King replied that he personally was wholeheartedly with us, and up to some weeks ago had never for a moment doubted that in war Italy would faithfully help her allies. The tactlessness of Austria, incredible to Italian popular feeling, had, however, incited public opinion in the past few weeks against Austria in such a way that now active co-operation with Austria would let loose a storm. The Ministry would not risk a revolt. He, the King, had unfortunately no power, only influence. If he dismissed the present Ministry, no other would assume the responsibility of office. All this, mainly because Austria was not ready to give any definite promise for the future, by which a change might perhaps have been wrought by now in public opinion. Whether this was still possible was very doubtful.
>
> " As the people do not understand the distinction, Italy, as a result of Austria's tactlessness, would unfortunately fail Germany also, which gave him, the King, great pain. He will again exert his influence on the Ministry and report the result."

The next day Herr von Kleist had nothing more consoling to report :

> " H.M. the King received me this morning and said : In spite of his repeated efforts yesterday, the Government still maintains its attitude on

neutrality. At the present time the people would only regard active assistance to the allies as help for Austria's plans for expansion on the Balkans **[Our war against France has nothing to do with this. It is, besides, our side and not Austria's, that she is to be fighting on.—W.]**, plans from which Austria has so far never once definitely pledged herself to refrain. The people will always confound Germany with Austria **[If the Government does nothing to prevent this, of course they will; but it is stupid.—W.]**; therefore the Government would be risking rebellion if they gave active assistance to Germany at the present time. **[A deliberate lie!—W.]** He, the King, must repeat that he is unfortunately powerless, as the view of the Government is shared by the majority of the Deputies. Even Giolitti, who is friendly to the Triple Alliance **[? ?—W.]**, and has just returned, thinks that there would not be a *casus fœderis*, but that the country needs rest, and must remain neutral, as there is no liability to give active help. **[The unmitigated scoundrel!—W.]** The Government intends to be armed for all eventualities. To my answer, that, as the possibility of assistance had thus disappeared, they were evidently thinking of menacing Austria, there being no other eventuality before them, the King said: 'One never knows what the men in the Government will do.' **[That is to say, he is dropping out entirely.—W.]** For the moment the King thought that nothing would happen."

The description of Giolitti as "an unmitigated scoundrel" is almost surpassed by the description of

the King himself, who, in a letter on August 3rd, informed the Kaiser that the Italian Government did not recognize a *casus fœderis* in the war which had just broken out. The letter was signed:

"Thy Brother and Ally,
"VITTORIO EMANUELE."

To "Ally" William added "Impudence," and to the name of the King the small but very expressive word "Rascal." On August 3rd, then, even the most frivolous and ignorant of optimists could no longer reckon on Italy's active assistance. Victor Emanuel's concluding remarks even left it to be feared that Italy might take an active part against Austria and Germany. England's attitude was therefore bound to have the greatest influence on Italy, as she depended on her in so many things.

This was a further consideration which ought to induce them not to irritate England by the occupation of Belgium. There was, in addition, the consideration that by this occupation Germany's prestige must suffer enormously in the eyes of the whole world. For Belgium's neutrality was not of the usual kind, like, for example, that of Greece. It was solemnly documented, and Prussia was one of the Powers guaranteeing it. With her invasion of Belgium she was committing not only a breach of neutrality but also of faith.

The greater the confidence that has been placed in one who gives his word, the greater is the fury against him and the contempt for him if he breaks it. Up to August, 1914, the majority of Belgians trusted Germany and were friendly towards her. After the invasion they became her most furious foes.

But not only in Belgium was the deepest indignation

aroused by the breach of faith which was followed by the slaughter of thousands of Belgians and the appalling devastation of the whole country; it aroused all civilized countries, and deprived Germany of the last friends she still had in them.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE BREACH OF FAITH

The invasion of Belgium was not only as morally condemnable as it was intelligible from a military point of view; it was also a profound political blunder.

But the soldiers commanded and the civilian politicians had to obey. To them only fell the thankless task of justifying the breach of faith in the eyes of the world. They did not make too great mental efforts over it. On this occasion they were again content to follow the convenient example of Berchtold, which he had set when dealing with Francis Joseph—i.e., pretending that one was forced to war by the hostile acts of others.

And in the case of Belgium, the Imperial Chancellor only held the noble office of a letter-carrier.

On July 29th the Foreign Office received a draft, drawn up by Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff himself, under the date July 26th, for a letter to the Belgian Government, which, after a few editorial alterations made by the Chancellor, Stumm and Zimmermann, was sent off the same day by Jagow, not to the Belgian Government, but to the German Ambassador in Brussels.

It ran:

> "The Imperial Government has received reliable reports regarding the intended advance of French

forces on the Meuse from Givet to Namur. They leave no doubt of France's intention (after combining with an English expeditionary force) to advance against Germany through Belgian territory. The Imperial Government cannot resist the fear lest Belgium, with the best intentions, will not be able to prevent without help a French (–English) advance with sufficient prospects of success for ample security to be given against the threat to Germany. The law of self-preservation demands that Germany should anticipate the enemy attack. It would therefore fill the German Government with the greatest regret if Belgium should see an act of hostility against her in the fact that the measures of her enemies force Germany, in her turn, to invade Belgian territory as a defensive measure. To prevent any misconception, the Imperial Government makes the following statement:

"1. Germany intends no hostilities against Belgium. If Belgium is willing to adopt a benevolent neutrality towards Germany in the war which is imminent, the German Government will pledge itself, at the conclusion of peace, *not only* to guarantee the possessions and independence of the kingdom completely, *but is even ready to meet in most benevolent fashion any claims by the kingdom for territorial compensation at the expense of France.*

"2. Germany pledges herself, under the above condition, to evacuate the kingdom as soon as peace is concluded.

"3. In the case of a friendly attitude on the part of Belgium, Germany is ready, by arrangement with the Royal Belgian authorities, to purchase for cash

all things required for her troops, and make good all damage which might be done by German troops.

"Should Belgium offer a hostile resistance to the German troops, in particular to impede their advance by the resistance of the Meuse fortresses or by destroying railways, roads, tunnels and other works, Germany, to her regret, will be forced to regard the kingdom as an enemy. In this case, Germany will not be able to assume any obligations to the kingdom, but would have to leave to the decision of arms the later arrangement of the relation of the two States to one another.

"The Imperial Government confidently hope that this contingency will not arise, and that the Royal Belgian Government will know how to take measures to prevent the occurrence of events such as those mentioned. In this case the friendly tie that unites the two neighbouring States would be drawn more closely and permanently."

To this text was appended the following passage, drafted by Moltke:

> "An unequivocal answer to this communication must be made within twenty-four hours after delivery, otherwise hostilities will be opened immediately."

Jagow, however, considered this too rude. He deleted this sentence in the communication to the Belgian Government, and substituted the following instructions for the German Minister in Brussels:

> "Your Excellency will at once communicate this in strict confidence to the Belgian Government and

> request an unequivocal answer within twenty-four hours.
>
> "Your Excellency will at once inform me by telegraph of the reception accorded to your disclosures and of the definite reply of the Royal Belgian Government."

As already mentioned, Herr von Moltke's communication was immediately accepted by the Foreign Office and dispatched with few editorial alterations. These are of no consequence; only one is worthy of note. The Chief of the General Staff obviously held the view that England would enter the war simultaneously with France; he, therefore, spoke of information which, like all information of a similar kind, of course leaves no doubt as to the intention of a "Franco-English" advance through Belgian territory. But the Foreign Office considered this too risky. It still hoped for England's neutrality. Stumm, therefore, deleted the words placed in brackets in the above copy, and contented himself with the "indubitable" establishment of the intention of a French advance through Belgium. It is only a matter of a couple of words, but their manipulation is very instructive. It showed how the General Staff understood the art of *fabricating for stock* complaints of French or Franco-English acts of hostility which made the war or the breach of neutrality inevitable, before such acts were even possible; these complaints were then brought forward as soon as they were needed. This method was actually followed. The document composed on July 26th, edited and dispatched on the 29th, was not immediately submitted to the Brussels Government. At that time the world was not yet prepared for the Franco-German war.

Jagow sent the document in a sealed envelope through a King's Messenger to Brussels to the German Minister, Herr von Below-Saleske, with the following covering letter :

> " I respectfully request Your Excellency to keep securely sealed the enclosure accompanying this order, and not to open it until you are instructed to do so by telegram from here. You will confirm by telegram the receipt of this order and the enclosure."

Thus the necessity which, according to Bethmann's pathetic assurance in his great war speech of August 4th, knows no law was already carefully and deliberately concocted on July 29th, and put away " securely sealed " on ice, so that it could be brought out when it was needed.

The need arose on August 2nd. Not until then did it become urgently necessary for the General Staff that Germany's security should be most dangerously threatened by the intended penetration of the French into Belgium. Then Jagow telegraphed to the Minister in Brussels :

> " Your Excellency will at once open enclosure to Order No. 88 and carry out instructions contained therein this evening at eight o'clock, German time. In the Imperial Government's declaration, however, the words ' not only ' and the sentence beginning with ' It is even ready ' are to be omitted under No. 1.
>
> " Also, the answer is to be demanded, not within twenty-four hours, but within twelve hours—i.e.,

by 8 a.m. to-morrow. Please assure the Belgian Government most emphatically that every doubt is precluded as to the correctness of our information concerning French plan, notwithstanding promises.

"Belgian answer must be to hand here by 2 p.m. to-morrow, German time. Your Excellency will, therefore, instantly wire answer hither, and, in addition, transmit it immediately upon receipt to General von Emmich, Union Hotel, Aix-la-Chapelle, through a member of Imperial Legation, preferably the Military Attaché, by automobile.

"Belgian Government must receive impression as though entire instructions in this matter had reached you only to-day. Leave it to your discretion to suggest to Belgian Government that it may withdraw with troops to Antwerp, and that we, if there desired, could take over protection of Brussels against internal disturbances."

The history of the Ultimatum to Belgium clearly reveals the mechanism by means of which the reasons of the German declarations of war in the first days of August were prepared.

Anyone who follows its operations must "receive the impression" as though the "entire" facts established by the German Government in those days were the more deeply untrue the more they are confirmed by repeated asseverations that they were absolutely "reliable" and "indubitable."

It was a terrible tragedy of moral collapse that ushered in the war.

But, at the same time, the satyr-play * was not to be lacking.

* Referring to the epilogue in lighter vein which followed a trilogy in the great tragic drama. (Translator's note.)

The "assembling" of French troops on the Belgian frontier was intended to impress the naïve Germans, whose senses were already befogged by the war-intoxication of the August days. But it was also desired to convince England that they were forced to invade Belgium. For this, stronger arguments were needed. And what straws were not snatched at then! The legendary airmen had again to come to the rescue. We have already communicated the text of the German declaration of war on France. In this it is remarkable that it emphasizes the statement that several of the airmen had notoriously violated Belgian neutrality by flying over Belgian territory.

It was, however, not to be expected that these intangible airmen would make any particular impression in England. Efforts had to be made to reach firm ground. Perhaps the automobile would succeed where the aeroplane failed.

On August 2nd the President of the Local Government in Düsseldorf telegraphed to the Imperial Chancellor:

> "The *Landrat* of Geldern telegraphed yesterday local Battalion reports that early this morning eighty French officers in Prussian officers' uniform vainly attempted to cross the frontier near Walbeck with twelve automobiles. On inquiry, *Landrat* further states Adjutant of local Battalion subsequently reports that report respecting eighty French officers has been, in the main, confirmed. Cars remained behind on Dutch territory. One officer who had advanced retreated before armed opposition."

Let us assume for a moment that the report was,

"in the main," correct, and not the product of the heated imagination of a few excited frontier guards.

Then the case in question was, primarily, a violation not of *Belgian* but of *Dutch* neutrality.

But, further, what, according to the report, had the frontier guards seen? Twelve automobiles with eighty occupants in Prussian officers' uniform. One of them who got out and stepped across the frontier was received, strange to say, not, like the Captain of Köpenick, with respect, in view of his uniform, but with armed opposition. At the same time, the guards at once observed that the eighty men in the cars had no right to wear their uniform. But they also knew, without further investigation, that the disguised men were not, say, Dutchmen, but Frenchmen—nay, French officers, who had driven through Belgium to Holland, and then to the German frontier. To get through Belgium and Holland without attracting notice, these gentlemen, instead of travelling in mufti, had obviously preferred to don Prussian uniform!

The whole story was just as senseless as that of the French doctor (reported on the same day), who, with two other Frenchmen, was caught at Metz in the act of poisoning wells with cholera bacilli. Later on, they no longer dared to make use of this story, but on August 2nd Jagow managed not only to take it seriously but even to make it the subject of diplomatic action. He telegraphed the story of the cholera bacilli to Rome with the order to circulate it in the local press. And to the Ambassador in London and the Ministers in Brussels and the Hague he sent the following telegram:

> "Please inform Government there that eighty French officers in Prussian officers' uniform, with

> twelve autos, this morning attempted to cross the German frontier near Walbeck, west of Geldern. This means the gravest conceivable violation of neutrality by France."

The German Foreign Office must have lost its head completely, to make itself thus ridiculous in the eyes of foreign countries.

Geldern, moreover, is situated near Wesel, where the French airmen were supposed to have been brought down. The military in that frontier district appear to have been particularly nervous and apt to see ghosts.

But General Emmich went still farther than Jagow. He gave the reason for the invasion of Belgium in a proclamation which ran :

> "Our troops acted under the compulsion of an unavoidable necessity, Belgian neutrality having been violated by French officers who, in disguise, entered Belgian territory in automobiles, in order to reach Germany." (Quoted by Dr. E. J. Gumbel in his pamphlet, "Vier Jahre Lüge" ("Four Years of Lies"), page 9.)

In his war speech of August 4th Bethmann-Hollweg was not ashamed to make use of this silly pretext for the invasion of Belgium. He acknowledged that the attack on Belgium "contravenes the dictates of International Law," as also that the French Government had declared in Brussels that it was willing to respect Belgium's neutrality so long as their opponent respected it. He forgot to remark that Jagow had declined to make the same declaration. He continued :

> "We knew, however, that France was ready for the invasion."

Yes, indeed, we knew already on July 29th that France was ready for the invasion on August 1st!

> "France could wait, but we could not, and a French attack on our flank on the Lower Rhine might have proved disastrous. We were therefore forced to disregard the protests of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments."

Here there is no more talk of Belgium's neutrality having been *already violated*. The fundamental reason given for the invasion is now only this: "We could not wait," and that, indeed, was the sole reason.

With lying and perfidy the way was paved for war in the beginning of July, with lying and perfidy in the first days of August the war was begun. The sequel was the inevitable consequence of the introduction. And thus again was proved the truth of that curse which clings to wrongdoing—that evil propagates itself by begetting more evil. Government and Army Command were never rid of the lie in which they had once involved themselves, and had to pile up the edifice of falsehood ever higher and higher, until on November 9th, 1918, it fell in with a crash.

CHAPTER XX

THE WORLD REVOLUTION

THE whole war-policy of William and his men had, from the outset, been built up upon false premises. They had decided to join in the Serbian adventure in the expectation that it would bring an easy triumph over Russia and, no doubt, also over France. Both Powers, inadequately equipped, would either quietly accept the blow dealt by Austria to Russian power in the Balkans, or, should they be provoked to war, would easily be conquered, as Germany had Italy and Rumania at her back and England would remain neutral. Thus, in any case, Germany would win glory and power, while if the conflict eventuated in war, territorial aggrandisement was also in prospect.

On July 29th, however, the calculation turned out to be false. It was now to be apprehended that, in the event of war against Russia and France, Rumania and Italy would not take part, and that, above all, England would offer active opposition. The game now threatened to become dangerous. Henceforth Bethmann strove to get out of it with a whole skin, but now it was too late. Austria had already begun war against Serbia, and, with her own mobilization, had started the race in war-preparations. When Bethmann wished to get out of this dangerous stadium, he encountered the opposition of the Austrian Government, and of the German General

Staff, which now saw only *one* way out of the strained situation: to strike with all possible speed. And finally he completely lost his head and poured oil upon the fire he desired to extinguish. Thus out of the frivolous Serbian adventure grew the terrible tragedy of the world-war.

But Moltke's military calculations at the end of July proved to be as false as Bethmann's diplomatic calculations at the beginning.

A rapid blow could only secure the victory on the condition that Belgium submitted, and permitted the German Army to pass through without offering resistance. Then a German victory was probable, precisely for this reason, that the ground given for the German invasion of Belgium was a fabrication—*i.e.*, the French had no strong forces stationed on their northern frontier.

If Belgium offered no resistance, the German Army Command might expect, after a few decisive blows, to advance with all speed to Paris and Calais, to force France to make peace, and, no less, England, whose entrance-gate, Dover, came within the field of the long-range German guns, which commanded the passage across the Channel. To dispose of Russia would then be no longer a difficult task.

Belgium, however, *did* offer resistance. It was, of course, broken, but it gave the French time to strengthen their northern frontier. The German advance was stopped in the Battle of the Marne, and thus the military prospects of victory were annihilated, as the political had already been. The continuation of the war against the superior force that henceforth grew from day to day could but result in Germany's bleeding to death, as William had already foreseen on July 31st, 1914, two days before he declared war on Russia. In regard to the

terrible struggle only one question remained—whether Germany's opponents were to bleed to death along with her. In the case of Russia this noble aim has been fully achieved. Not quite so completely did it succeed with France and Italy, still less with England, and not at all with America and Japan, who, on the contrary, gained enormously.

And it is fortunate that the war did not cause the whole world to bleed to death, for who, then, would have been left to feed the victims and to bind their wounds?

From the day on which Belgium decided upon resistance and England entered the war, Germany's position was desperate.

The German General Staff at once recognized this, and drew its conclusions, in its own fashion, there and then. This is proved *inter alia* by a memorandum which the Chief of the General Staff sent to the Foreign Office on August 5th, and in which the war policy is laid down—a fresh proof that the leader of German policy was now the Chief of the General Staff, and not the Imperial Chancellor, who, henceforth, had only to carry out the orders of the former. The memorandum runs:

> "England's declaration of war which, according to reliable information, was intended from the outset of the conflict, compels us to exhaust every means that may contribute to victory. The grave situation in which the Fatherland finds itself makes it an imperative duty to employ every means likely to damage the enemy. The unscrupulous policy pursued against us by our enemy justifies us in sticking at nothing.
>
> "The insurrection of Poland has been prepared. The seed will fall on fertile soil, for even now our

troops are being welcomed in Poland almost as friends. In Wloclavek, for instance, they have been received with salt and bread.

"The feeling of America is friendly to Germany. American public opinion is indignant at the shameful procedure adopted against us. It behoves us to exploit this feeling to the utmost. Influential personages in the German colony must be invited to continue to influence the Press in our favour. Perhaps the United States may be persuaded to a naval demonstration against England, for which, as the reward of victory, Canada beckons.

"As I already stated in my communication of the 2nd inst., No. 1, P., the revolt of India and Egypt, and also in the Caucasus, is a matter of the highest importance. Through the treaty with Turkey, the Foreign Office will be in a position to realize this idea and to excite the fanaticism of Islam.

"(Signed) v. MOLTKE."

We see from this that von Moltke even expected the Imperial Chancellor to accept as gospel, without any proof, and on the mere allegation of "reliable information," such an assertion as that "England's declaration of war was intended from the outset of the conflict."

It is more terrible that the General Staff did not, at the very beginning of the war, deduce from the desperate situation to which it had, by its own policy, reduced Germany, the conclusion that any reasonable civilian would have drawn, at least so long as he himself was not infected by the military war fever, viz., that one must strive to rescue the Empire as speedily as possible from this dangerous situation by a policy of conciliation and

of explicit renouncement of all manner of conquest. On the contrary, it decided it was now a question of employing *every* means that might injure the enemy, whatever the consequences, and of sticking at nothing. So it took that path of well-considered frightfulness which was of no use strategically, as it could be imitated by the enemy and then often recoiled with augmented violence upon the Army and the people of Germany, but which had the supreme effect of completely ruining Germany's prestige in the world. The invasion of Belgium had deprived Germany of her last friends. The atrocities of the German war methods were immediately set on foot (in Belgium, of all places !), and even among neutrals these methods transformed into raging hatred and scorn the admiration which even her enemies had previously felt for the achievements of Germany. They engendered also that feeling which ultimately made it possible not only for America to enter the war, but for the victors finally to dare to impose peace terms of the most extreme severity without meeting adequate resistance on the part of their peoples.

Born of a self-created necessity that believed it need recognize no law, it was this method of waging war that brought the German necessities to a climax.

Yet another thing is worthy of note in Moltke's statements. They spin out further a thought that had already dawned upon William in his first consternation at England's warning on July 30th. Even at that hour he had in mind the instigation of a rising of Mohammedans and Indians, if not for Germany's salvation, then for England's ruin. Moltke added the revolt of Poland. And he hoped to win over the United States by the promise of Canada !

This ingenious policy was pushed farther and farther

during the war. As the United States were not to be won over, Mexico was now promised a few States of the Union. Simultaneously, however, salvation was sought with the rebels of Ireland, the anarchists of Italy, the dynamiters in America, and, finally, with the Bolshevists of Russia, all of whom were encouraged with might and main by the German General Staff.

We see that Lenin and Trotsky were not the first who saw deliverance from an impossible situation in the world-revolution stirred up by their emissaries. William and Moltke had anticipated them.

Like every scheme connected with their world-policy, this too was executed without any kind of deeper knowledge of the world they desired to dominate or to influence. They employed the most unsuitable means, they summoned the most unsuitable elements to their aid, they let themselves be guided by the most impossible expectations.

A sample of the way in which they attempted to stir up the Mohammedan world to revolt is given by Bernard Shaw in his " Peace Conference Hints " (London, 1919, page 90):

> " Early in the war the German Government, wishing to stir up a rebellion against the French in Morocco and Algeria, circulated a document written in very choice Arabic to the effect that I am a great prophet, and that I once told an American Senator that the violation of Belgian neutrality was an incident of the war, and not the cause of it. I am quite unable to follow that operation of the German mind which led to the conclusion that any Moorish sheikh could be induced to rush to arms because some dog of an unbeliever had made a

> statement that was neither interesting nor even intelligible in Morocco to some other dog of an unbeliever; but the Germans formed that conclusion and spent money on it."

Unfortunately, they lost thereby not only money, but also their good name, for they did not confine themselves to circulating leaflets among the enemy; they also utilized the protection of the ex-territorial privilege of their diplomatic and consular representatives with the neutrals, to instigate outrages of the most varied description on the lives and property of the enemy civilian population.

Success they had none, except in the East. As the German policy of involving her adversaries in her own ruin attained the desired aim only in Russia, so it was there alone they attained their purpose of bringing about a revolution. Both aims were very closely connected, and the downfall of Tsarism would have followed the Russian military collapse even without the promotion of Bolshevism by the German Government.

The narrowness of the German policy again appears in this, that in the endeavour to burn down its neighbour's house it did not observe that it was setting fire to its own.

It cherished the superstition which, to be sure, it had in common with many adherents of world-revolution, that revolutions could be called forth, as desired, by skilful and stirring emissaries who had the necessary funds at disposal. To this it added the further superstition that the spirits one invoked might be commanded at pleasure, and put back in the corner after they had done their duty.

It was incredibly shortsighted of a German capitalistic-

agrarian military Monarchy, which hated anti-militarism and the proletarian revolution like poison, to encourage the keenest champions of proletarian revolution and of the dissolution of military subordination, as the Bolshevists were during the stage of their struggle for political power. The Russian Revolution, and especially its second act, the victory of Bolshevism, had made the most profound impression upon the German proletariate, and also upon the German Army, and had enormously increased their revolutionary determination. The fact that the German General Staff's previous love for the Bolshevists was then transformed into the grimmest hatred did not diminish the revolutionary effect of Bolshevism upon Germany, but rather enhanced it.

Thus, the potentates who instigated the world-war were finally hoisted with their own petard. To this extent world-history showed itself once more as the world's Judgment Day,* a thing which does not often happen, for the world is by no means ordered on teleological principles. Already, on July 30th, William had had a presentiment of the collapse, even before he had declared war. If the Pompadour is supposed to have originated the expression, "*After* us the deluge," in William's case one may use the variation, "*Hold out* until the deluge."

* Alluding to Schiller's famous line, "Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht." (Translator's note.)

CHAPTER XXI

THE-WORLD WAR AND THE GERMAN PEOPLE

SINCE the publication of the Austrian documents the whole world is agreed that the action of the potentates of Germany who launched the war was unspeakably wanton, short-sighted and reckless. Only the moral qualities of the guilty parties are still in dispute. This question is important in judging of the *persons,* not of the *institutions*. Whatever the *moral* verdict may be—after taking cognizance of the German documents, there should not be much dispute about it—it has long been possible to find a political verdict. It condemns the subjection of civil authority to military force and passes sentence on the Monarchy.

We have already remarked in dealing with the Szögyeny case that an idiot as leading statesman is more dangerous for the community than a scoundrel.

No constitution, however elaborately devised, no democracy, no Soviet system, nor any aristocracy, not even one of philosophers on the Platonic model, can prevent scoundrels from getting to the head of the State. But with every kind of constitution, whether of a State, of a political party, a commune, a church, or other organization the leadership of which is entrusted only to men who have won the general confidence of those concerned, a rascal can only get to the top through great services rendered to the community,

through the impression he has made by a superior intelligence. It is only in the hereditary Monarchy, which makes the personality of the Supreme Head of the State dependent, not upon the services he renders to the State, but upon the chance accident of birth, that occasionally not only rascals but also dullards or lunatics govern the State.

The Government that brought the war upon us did not, however, act entirely without judgment. However incompetent and ignorant the Imperial Government proved to be in its foreign policy, it showed itself, in the decisive days, master of the art of winning the increasing confidence of the people at home, in the same measure as it lost that of the other nations.

We have seen how determinedly the German Social Democracy stood out against the frivolous challenge of the world-war that lay in the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia, and how William looked askance at the "Sozis" demonstrations for peace, and promised violent measures against them.

Had the German Social Democracy known that the Austrian Ultimatum had not taken the German Government by surprise, that the latter undoubtedly knew its actual trend, although, perhaps, not its wording, even before its delivery in Belgrade, and that Germany was not the peaceable third party endeavouring to intervene between the ally and her opponents, but the fellow-conspirator of Austria, then our Party—as might have been expected with certainty in view of its attitude at that time—would have turned as sharply against the German Government as it did against the Austrian. Then William would have had either to forgo war or to begin it by locking up every leader of the Social Democracy, *i.e.*, by declaring war simultaneously on

the Entente and on the German proletariat. The ruling system would then have been doomed from the outset, while the German nation would have been saved. This menace to the reigning sovereigns of the Empire was recognized by Bethmann-Hollweg from the start, and his efforts were directed much less to the prevention of the war than to the creation of a favourable moral basis for it in Germany. To this he devoted his best attention, his entire acumen. And he succeeded in this task. For this purpose the German people had to be kept in ignorance of all that had actually taken place between Austria and Germany since the Serajevo outrage. It was, indeed, impossible to prevent the growth of a strong indignation against Austria's aggression ; but they knew how to preserve their own halo as the peace-lover whose task was handicapped only by a second peculiarity of the German mind, a peculiarity no less laudable than its pacific temper—namely, its unwavering fidelity to a friend even when he has stumbled.

Foreign countries were, of course, mistrustful from the beginning. We have already seen examples of this in the case of French and English statesmen. The Belgian Baron Beyens wrote from Berlin to Brussels on July 26th :

> "The existence of a preconcerted plan between Berlin and Vienna is proved in the eyes of my colleagues and myself by the persistence with which the Wilhelmstrasse denies that it had cognizance of the contents of the Austrian Note before Thursday last (July 23rd)."

Even the mistrustful elements, however, had no idea how far this "preconcerted plan" went. The German

people themselves were still less critical. Doubt, indeed, arose among their ranks, but, in general, even those who considered William's Government capable of any mischief did not believe it could be so boundlessly stupid as to risk the peace of the world and Germany's future for the sake of Austria's grievances against Serbia.

And whilst, abroad, mistrust against Germany increased in view of her amazing attitude, there arose among the German people a rapidly-growing anger against Russia. For the German Government manipulated most skilfully its intelligence apparatus, which in those days, when Germany was beginning to be cut off from foreign countries, was for the masses in Germany the only source of information regarding foreign policy. A German with no other source of information could not but believe firmly that Germany was working feverishly for peace ; that she would succeed in winning over Austria to this view, but that Russia was determined to seize the opportunity to go to war. Thus, in the eyes of the German people Russia finally stood forth as the disturber of peace, the assailant, and France, and ultimately also England, as her criminal accomplices.

How deep this view had taken root is evidenced by the fact that on June 7th, 1915, the King of Bavaria could venture to make the pronouncement already quoted :

> " Upon Russia's declaration of war followed that of France ! "

And even in our days, in the White Book of June, 1919, the four "independent Germans," after completing their inspection of the documents, have testified that the war was, for Germany, an " unavoidable *war of defence* "

against Russia (page 44). Now the moment appeared to have arrived, which the German Social Democracy had already had, not infrequently, under consideration, and which (as even the most international of its members unequivocally declared) made it imperative on them to turn against Russia, and, if Russia were supported by France, also against the latter.

About the year 1900 Bebel declared that if it came to war with Russia, " the enemy of all culture and of all the oppressed, not only in her own country, but also the most dangerous enemy of Europe, and especially for us Germans," he would " shoulder his gun." He quoted and confirmed this declaration in 1907 at the Party Congress in Essen (Protocol, page 255).

Long before this Frederick Engels had given his views on this question when, in 1891, " the champagne orgy of Kronstadt had gone to the heads of the French *bourgeoisie*," the Franco-Russian Alliance was initiated, and France appeared to him " ripe for rather excessive follies in Russia's service." At that time he considered it necessary lest, in case of a war, " any misunderstanding should arise at the last moment between the French and German Socialists," to make clear to the former " what, according to my conviction, would be the necessary attitude of the latter in face of such a war."

An article which he published in the " Almanach du parti ouvrier pour 1892 " served this purpose.

It was based on the view that neither Germany nor France would provoke the war, for it would devastate both, without any gain whatsoever.

> " Russia, on the other hand, protected by her geographical and economic position against the annihilating consequences of a defeat, Russia, official

Russia alone can serve her interests in so terrible a war and work directly to that end. . . . But, in any case, as political affairs stand to-day, the chances are ten to one that at the first cannon shot on the Vistula the French armies march on the Rhine.

"And then Germany fights for her bare existence. . . . In such circumstances (if Germany were beaten), what would become of the German Social-Democratic party? So much is certain: neither the Tsar, nor the French *bourgeois*-republicans, nor the German Government itself, would let slip such a fine opportunity for the crushing of the only Party that is 'the enemy' for all three. . . .

"But if the victory of the Russians over Germany means the crushing of German Socialism, what then becomes the duty of the German Socialists in regard to such a prospect? Are they to remain passive in view of events that threaten their destruction? . . .

"By no means. In the interests of European revolution they are bound to maintain all the positions they have conquered, and not to capitulate either to the external or to the internal enemy. And that can only be done by fighting to the death Russia and all her allies, whoever they may be. Should the French Republic place itself in the service of His Majesty the Tsar and Autocrat of all the Russias, the German Socialists would fight it with grief, but fight it we would." (Published in German under the title, "Der Sozialismus in Deutschland," *Neue Zeit*, X. 2, pages 585, 586.)

These currents of thought were still active in the German Social Democracy in 1914. They were based on

the view that the impulse to war could come only from Russia, not from Germany. Ten years after Engels' article I had still named Russia among the European peace-breakers, not Germany. At a later date I would certainly not have repeated this remark. Since then there had taken place, on the one hand, Russia's defeat in the war against Japan, and the Russian Revolution, while, on the other, Germany had started her naval armaments and her active policy in the Mohammedan world.

Russia, with revolution in her midst, had now become less dangerous to the democracy of Europe than the still unshakable, all-powerful German military Monarchy.

And it was no longer at all possible to regard the German or the Austrian Government, the latter of which was ruling without a parliament in 1914, as champions against the Tsarist autocracy.

A revolutionary Russia would have appeared far more dangerous to them than a Tsarist Russia, just as a free Serbia was considered by them as their worst enemy.

Characteristic in this respect are William's marginal notes to a report sent by Pourtalès from Petrograd on July 25th, concerning an interview with Sasonow. Pourtalès writes:

> "My reference to the monarchical principle [supposed to be violated by the Serbs.—K.] made little impression upon the Minister. Russia knew, he said, what she owed to the monarchical principle."

To which William adds:

> "No longer, after her fraternization with the French Social-Republic."

Besides this severe censure, pronounced by the Kaiser on the Russian Tsar for excessive Republican and even "Social-Republican" sympathies, the marginal notes to the Pourtalès' report contain another noteworthy remark, which proves with what levity William still, on July 25th, viewed the war with Russia. Pourtalès reports:

> "Sasonow exclaimed: 'If Austria-Hungary devours Serbia we shall go to war with her.'"

To which William retorted:

> **"Well, go ahead!"**

The situation created by the Revolution in Russia and by Germany's world-policy was totally different to that existing in 1891. But the old belief that the war against Russia was the "holy war" of the German Social Democracy was still quick among its ranks, and this belief, in conjunction with the German method of doctoring news, impelled many a good Socialist and Internationalist to vote for the war credits on August 4th, not because he disavowed his principles, but because he believed that this was the best way to apply them.

It would, of course, be an exaggeration to suppose that all in the ranks of the Social Democrats had been actuated by such considerations. Many a one among them had already held strong nationalistic views before the war—nationalistic in contradistinction to national. Under the latter may be understood a championship of the self-determination of one's own people, which respects the self-determination of every other people, and which subordinates national as well as private interests to the common interests of the international

proletariat and of humanity. A Nationalist, on the contrary, is one for whom his own nation stands higher than others, who cares more for the enemies of his class among his own countrymen than for his own class among others.

Before the war such elements already existed in the German Social Democracy as, no doubt, in almost every Socialistic party. The war, and before that the incipient bellicose temper of the people, gave at one blow an enormous impetus to nationalism among the Socialist ranks—and that not in Germany alone.

The more a Socialist party becomes a party of the masses, the stronger becomes its nationalism ; the more rapid its growth before the war, the less opportunity it had to educate its followers.

Nowhere had it grown by such leaps and bounds as in Germany, where the number of Social Democrat voters increased by a million between 1907 and 1912. How strong the national idea everywhere is the war and its consequences have most clearly shown. For the great untrained masses, however, it easily degenerates into the nationalistic idea, especially when the country is in great danger, unless this idea is paralysed by other closely-connected and powerful factors, *e.g.*, a ruthless policy of Socialist persecution by their own Government.

William had willed such a policy. The fact that the will did not become the deed is, no doubt, to be attributed to Bethmann. It was probably the one sensible thing he did in that time.

In addition to all this, the mass of the thoughtless—and these were recruited from all circles and not least from among the writers and thinkers—welcomed the war with jubilation, because they expected it would be short, and was already as good as won, whilst from

Petrograd, on the outbreak of the war, a "morning-after" feeling was reported, and the French took the field in gloomy silence and with clenched teeth.

In a single night the temper of the German people blazed into warlike enthusiasm for the repulse of the national enemy, by whom, they imagined, they were basely attacked and threatened with annihilation.

To all these influences the majority of the German Social Democracy succumbed, and, to a still higher degree, the rest of the people. Had William threatened the "Sozis" with arrest as recently as July 28th, he was able to proclaim on August 1st that he "knew no more parties"—*i.e.*, that they, one and all, had capitulated to him.

So by Bethmann's tactics the great task was accomplished, and the German people were made accomplices in his war-policy, in the sense that they sanctioned it and supported it, up to the military collapse.

It was not, however, the *actual* policy of William and his Government for which the German people enthusiastically staked life and property, but a policy which in fact did not exist at all, a mere mirage, made plausible by every fraudulent means available down to the ignominious end.

And this is precisely what we most clearly gather from the Foreign Office documents. These show that among the peoples who were sacrificed to William's war-policy the German nation heads the list. The more they incriminate the Hohenzollern régime, the more they exculpate the German people, for they testify most distinctly that the latter had no notion of the actual course of the events that led to war—far less than the other nations—while those politicians who from scattered

indications had guessed the truth were cut off during the war from every possibility of criticizing events and of enlightening the masses.

But have no other Governments prepared misleading statements concerning the outbreak of the war ?

It is not impossible that they have. In Bismarck's well-known phrase, never are so many lies told as before a war, during an election, and after a shoot. And the Tsarist régime has never been exactly regarded as fanatically devoted to the truth. But in 1914 the Governments of the Entente had no reason so to dupe the nations as had those of the Central Powers. For neither France, England, or Russia at that time wanted war, but dreaded it, and justly so, in view of their internal difficulties and inadequate armaments.

In addition, the period of war preparation, which might necessitate untruths and concealment, did not begin for Germany's opponents until July 24th, when they learned of the Austrian Ultimatum, which was the first indication of the danger of war. For the Central Powers the period of concealment, silence, misrepresentation, began already on July 5th. In the period from July 5th to July 23rd, they created, completely undisturbed by foreign countries and without any impelling reason, that groundwork of mendacity upon which the whole conduct of the war was built up.

One can render no greater service to the German people than to expose the lies that led them astray. By this means they are *morally* exculpated in every respect in the eyes of all the world.

The *moral* exculpation is, however, counterbalanced by *political* incrimination.

Misled by the statesmen of the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs, the German people were made the

willing instrument of their plans, and were thereby placed in a false position. The great majority of the German people felt their solidarity, almost up to the very end of the war, and in many cases down to our days, with those who duped them and led them and all Europe to destruction. The nation was blind to their crimes and misdeeds; it screened them, and it passionately championed their innocence.

So, in spite of its moral blamelessness, it was burdened with the political guilt of the dynasty and its henchmen, and became the object of the fiercest hate and loathing to the whole world, a hatred that imposed upon it, after its defeat, the most terrible of peace terms and treated it as a race of lepers.

He who loves the German people, not only the national German but also the international Socialist and Democrat, to whom every nation is equally dear, must endeavour to deliver it from this terrible ban, to free it from the awful burden laid upon it by the old régime.

This process of the rehabilitation of the German people in international esteem is continually hampered, not only by those who still adhere to the fallen régime, or were even its actual accomplices, but also by politicians who, although they have now recognized how pernicious it was, still cannot make up their minds to see things as they really were.

They believe they are serving the German people by proving its innocence through the exculpation of its former masters. But all they are doing is merely to keep alive the appearance of its guilt, as that of its former rulers becomes more and more notorious from day to day. It is to be hoped that the German and Austrian documents now communicated will make the continuance of this perverse policy as impossible as they must make

the return of the military Monarchies of the Hohenzollerns and Habsburgs.

What individual brave and perspicacious German Socialists and pacifists already recognized and openly proclaimed during the war (that the German people was most shamefully duped and deceived by its Government, and that only in this way could it be driven to war) should now at last be acknowledged, unreservedly, without any "if" or "but," or palliative seeking for guilty parties abroad. This is incumbent on every honest citizen in Germany, who does not swear by the divinity of the Hohenzollerns.

This will be the best means of winning back the trust of the peoples for Germany, and thereby of repressing on the side of the victors that military policy of force, which has become the greatest menace to the peace and freedom of the world.

APPENDIX

The present work was already in print when I learned the results of the investigations which were undertaken by the Foreign Office during the month of October, at the instance of Herren Montgelas and Schücking, in connection with Bussche's notes on the events of July 5th and 6th in Potsdam.

Although I could no further deal with them in the text, I consider it necessary to state that they do not alter my views of those events.

They show that the Kaiser, on the morning of July 6th, sent for Admiral von Capelle, who was acting as deputy in Tirpitz's absence from Berlin, to come to Potsdam, and informed him of "the strained situation so that he might deliberate on what was to be done."

In addition, William sent at the same time for a representative of the General Staff. He came in the person of General von Bertrab, who in his communication to the Foreign Office still speaks of the Kaiser as "H.M." According to a report of Count Waldersee, the Kaiser informed the General, for communication to the Chief of the General Staff—General von Moltke was then at Karlsbad—that he, the Kaiser, had promised the Emperor Francis Joseph "*to back him with the German forces, should complications arise out of Austria-Hungary's proposed action against Serbia.*"

Count Waldersee adds:

> "*General von Bertrab's audience in Potsdam did not place me, General von Moltke's representative in all matters pertaining to war, under the necessity of giving any orders. The regulation mobilization-operations were concluded on March* 31*st*, 1914. *The Army was, as ever, prepared.*"

This is surely a very interesting communication from the purely military standpoint. The *political* significance of these interviews is as little diminished thereby as it is by insisting on styling them "audiences" instead of "conferences with military authorities."

It is also not quite clear why such violent efforts are being made to disavow those conferences. It would have been nothing short of the height of folly had William not held them, having once promised Francis Joseph "to back him with the German forces," whatever the Serbian adventure might entail.

Having given this pledge, and having immediately afterwards started on his northern cruise, a conference with the chiefs of the Army and the Navy was the least to which William, as Supreme War Lord, was then bound. It was in this pledge, not in the military conferences, that William's guilt lay. The conferences were only the consequences of the pledge, which is confirmed anew by Count Waldersee's evidence.

Moreover, the statements of Herren Capelle, Bertrab and Waldersee confirm the *secrecy* in which the military conferences were wrapped. Both Capelle and Bertrab were received by the Kaiser in the park "personally and without witnesses." Each spoke separately with him, face to face. This was certainly a *council of war*

of no ordinary kind. All the more does it remind one of a *conspiracy*.

It is to be hoped that the Investigation Committee will throw full light upon this dark affair.

But enough is already known to enable us to pass a political judgment on the proceedings of that time.

THE END

Printed at The Chapel River Press, Kingston, Surrey.

The personality and position of Karl Kautsky puts his unique book in the front rank of authoritative records, and settles, once for all, the question of the personal responsibility of William Hohenzollern for the outbreak of the Great War. Appointed by the German Republican Government to examine the secret archives of the German Foreign Office, Kautsky was able to study the documents which passed between the German authorities and the other parties to the great conspiracy, documents which passed through the hands of the ex-Kaiser and bear his notes and comments IN HIS OWN HAND! Those notes and comments show William Hohenzollern as the driving force behind the war-party in Germany, as a man determined not to let slip what seemed so favourable an opportunity of settling accounts with Russia — and, if necessary, the world.

While everything else that has hitherto appeared is personal opinion, myth, or conjecture, this—THE REPORT OF THE GERMAN REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT'S OWN REPRESENTATIVE—is an official document which is published for the edification and benefit of humanity. It is a remarkable and significant fact that for a long time the German Government sought to shelve the publication of this book—so unfavourable was Karl Kautsky's report on the responsibility of the ex-Kaiser.

[SEE INSIDE FLAP.]

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